THE GOLDEN AGE FANZINE

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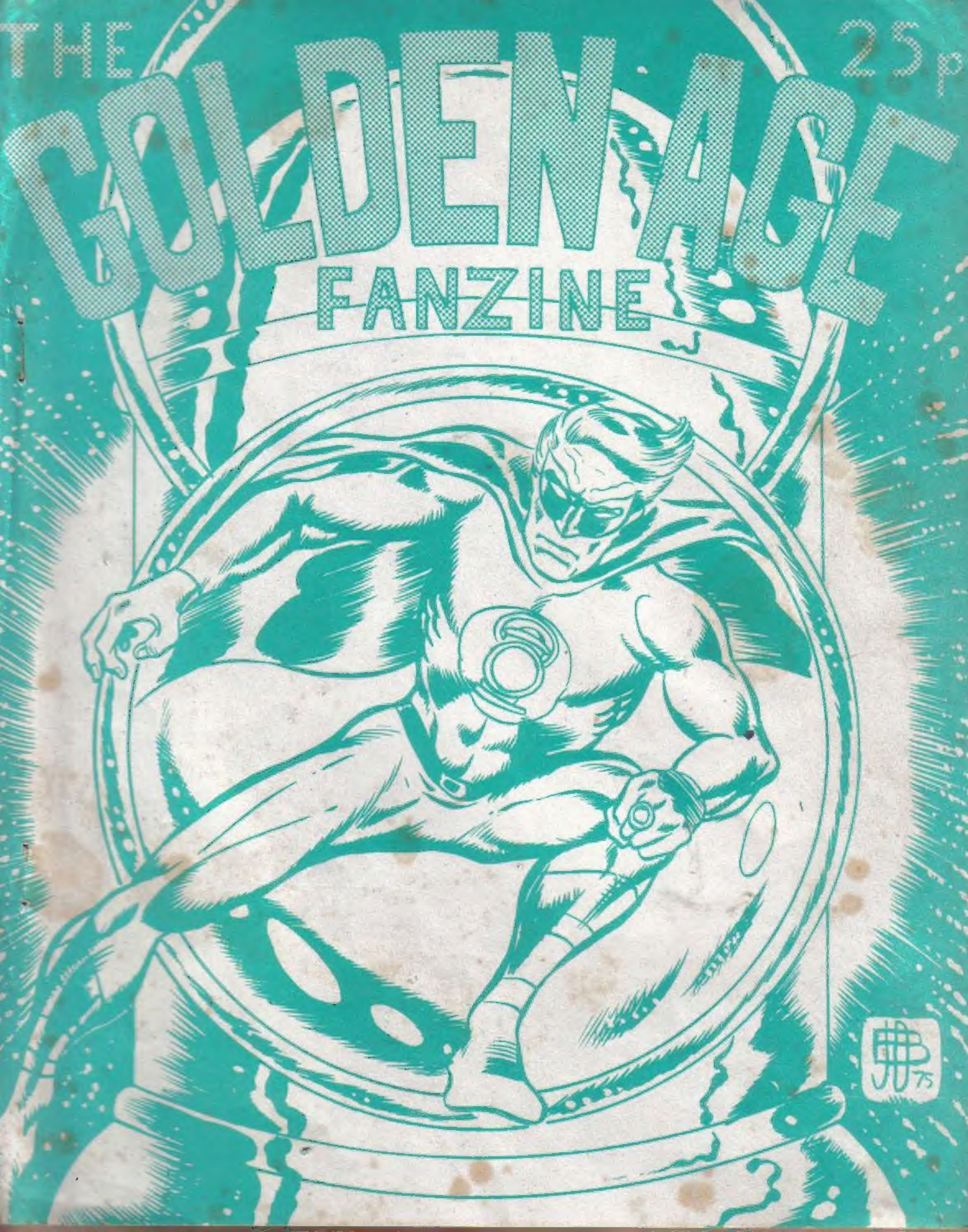

THE GOLDEN AGE FANZINE No.2

OCTOBER 1976

EDITORIAL

Late,isn't it? Having had more than its fair share of problems,the Golden Age Fanzine No.2 is finally here.I could say it won't be as long again to the next one - but you can never be sure with fanzine publishing,so I won't.Besides, the thing to do is sit back and enjoy this issue now you have it.Right?

Right.So a few words about some of the features in this issue.Mike Hill once again has turned in a couple of lengthy pieces on Human Torch vs Sub-Mariner and Green Lantern The initial plan was to continue both of these,but this would mean two continuing features next issue,leaving little space for new subjects.Still, reader reaction is the ultimate deciding factor.Let us know what you think.

It came to my notice a while ago that an intriguing Golden Age hero,the Fantom of the Fair - or Fantoman,as he was later known,was without an origin story.So I thought it would be a good idea to set that straight and suggested this to Mike Hill.Mike came up with the story in this issue,transferred to strip form by Russ Nicholson, based on hints as to the Fantom's origins in his first appearance,in Centaur's Amazing Mystery Funnies Vol.2 No.7 from 1939.I hope you like it.Anyone else know of any other Golden Age characters without a formal origin?

It just remains to thank everyone who helped with this issue - Jean-Daniel Breque,for his excellent cover,Mike Hill writing most of this issue,and Russ Nicholson,Ray Hopkins and Colin Jennings for doing the remaining artistic chores.Also to David Nightingale for his help with production.

Hope to be here again some time in the not distant future.You can help that come about by contributing - let us know if you have any ideas,or want us to supply some.

Sincerely Alan Austin

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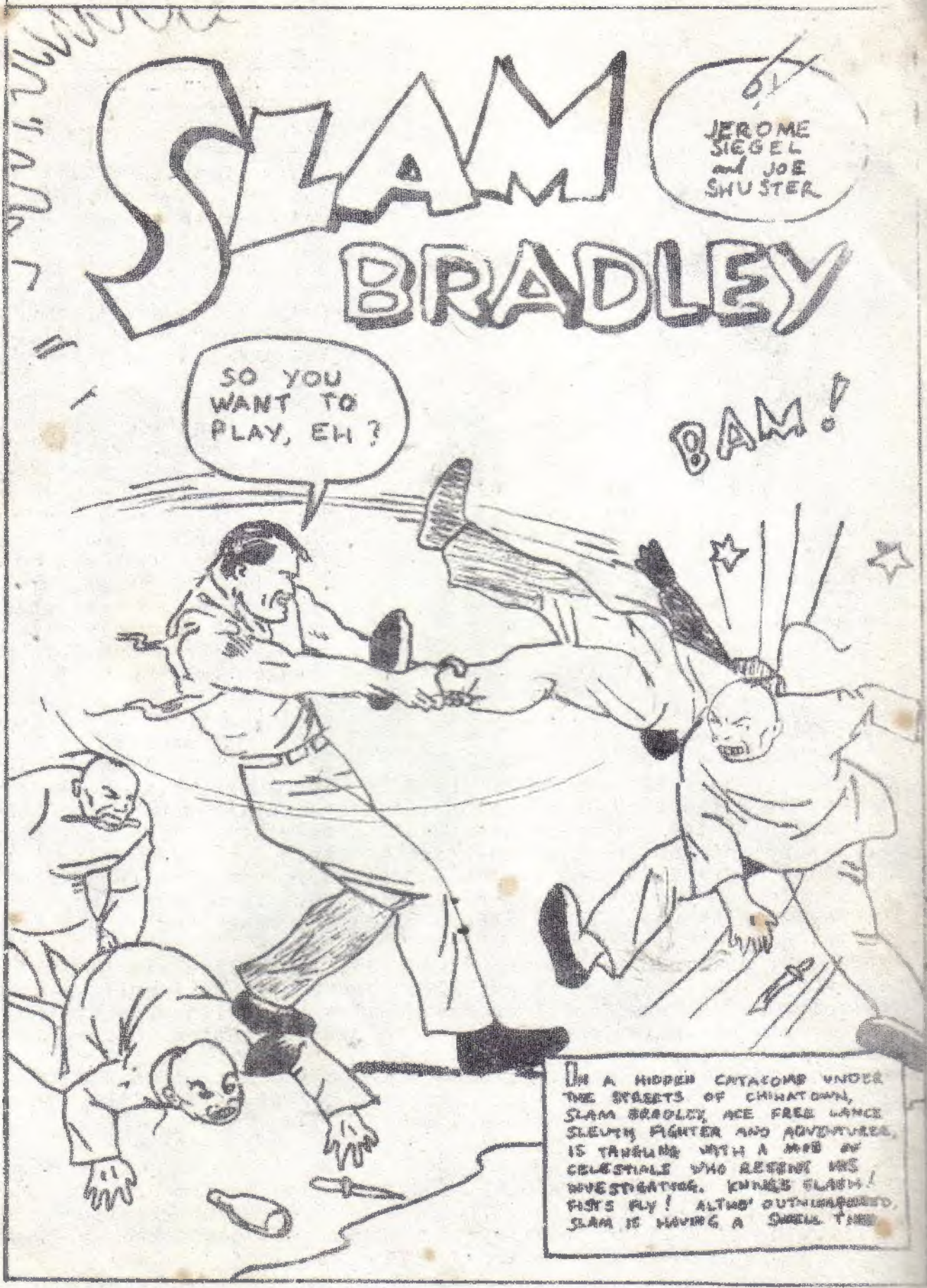

SLAM BRADLEY
JEROME SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER
SO YOU WANT TO PLAY, EH?
BAM!
IN A HIDDEN CATACOMB UNDER THE STREETS OF CHINATOWN, SLAM BRADLEY, ACE FREE LANCE SLEUTH FIGHTER AND ADVENTURER, IS TANGLING WITH A MOB OF CELESTIALS WHO RESENT HIS INVESTIGATING. KNIVES FLASH! FISTS FLY! ALTHO' OUTNUMBERED, SLAM IS HAVING A SWELL TIME

"Action,Adventure,Detective - And More,Fun!"

by Alan Austin

A dynamic duo were the stars of Detective Comics even before Batman appeared in issue 27,May 1939.No,not the dynamic duo - this pair were known as Slam Bradley,detective,and Shorty Morgan,his pint-sized assistant.Perhaps not as dynamic as Batman and Robin,this duo deserves a bit more attention than they have received.After all,had you even heard of them?

The strip 'Slam Bradley' began in Detective Comics No.1,March 1937,and ended in No.152,October 1949.A twelve year run for a non-costumed hero strip,and a filler at that,can't be bad,so it must have had something going for it.Whatever that 'it' was,though,faded out in the later years.However,that doesn't concern us,since I only intend to cover the early years of Slam Bradley,when he was still the main feature of Detective Comics - that is,the first 26 issues.

The bright young artist and writer team behind Slam Bradley was none other than that of Jerome Siegel and Joseph Shuster.If only in terms of the longevity of the character,Slam Bradley was their most successful creation after Superman.Although Superman appeared over a year after Slam Bradley,Superman had been conceived much earlier. (See elsewhere in this issue.) But they were able to use Slam Bradley to improve their standards for the eventual publication of the Superman strip.In fact,Slam Bradley,of all the other strips they did in the 1930s - Spy,Federal Men,Dr Occult - looked most like Superman in layout and overall presentation - even down to the background characters, some bearing a striking resemblance to Lois Lane and other supporting characters in the Superman strip.And didn't Slam himself look just a bit like Clark Kent?

Right from the beginning,Shuster's artwork,although far less polished than other comic artists at the time (nowadays,with the likes of Neal Adams to compare with,Shuster's finished inks would look like rough pencil layouts),was very powerful,almost explosive.When Slam hit the oriental villain,you could feel it - the whole panel was alive with action.But if you looked really closely,there wasn't a great deal in the panel - it was a case of using the minimum amount of effort to get the maximum effect.Some of today's artists,paying too much attention to each individual panel they draw,would do well to look at Shuster's drawings.Consider a current comic book page where there are,say,six panels,each with quite a bit of detail,and each with about the same amount of words in the balloons/captions.You might spend 15-20 seconds on each panel,slowly and evenly progressing across and down the page. Examine a page of Shuster's work - one panel crowded with action and people and wording,the next with comparatively little,and so on.The effect of the uneven pacing of the panels is a jerking motion,from one panel,quickly to the next,then slow,then off again - get the idea? For a strip with action,it certainly creates the desired effect - not a slow,turgid progression but a fast,uneven pace that keeps the reader on his toes.

Siegel certainly gave Shuster all the right ingredients to make an action-packed '30s detective strip.What do the '30s suggest? Gangsters ...G-Men.....oriental villains....opium dens....the classic horror films....Boris Karloff....mad scientists....tough private eyes....and so

on.The strip certainly had that '30s feel that now seems timeless,the events of those years having for so long been used in the entertainment media that they are escapist rather than grim reality to the people who lived through that era.

The first story,from Detective Comics No.1,just about had it all. It opens with a door being crashed in by "a swarm of blue-coats",who are just in time to help Slam Bradley put the finishing touches to a demolition job on a gang of orientals.Slam is wanted back at police headquarters.

As he burts through the door,he sends flying a small figure in a green suit with a Sherlock Holmes hat and an attache case."Could you use a good assistant?" asks Shorty Morgan in mid-air.Ignored,while Slam is being introduced to a new client by Captain Frawley,Shorty explains to the switchboard operator how he has taken a mail order course in scientific detection,and that as his partner,Slam would always have science at his fingertips.The girl points out a disadvantage: "Yeah, but then he'd have you,too."

Slam excuses his torn shirt - like Doc Savage,a torn shirt was virtually his uniform - to his client,an attractive young lady,one Rita Carlisle,daughter of the Carlisle chain store owner.Her assignment is somewhat less grand than her background - she has a poodle dog that she is soon to enter in a contest,and she wants Slam to guard it.Slam erupts.A case hardly befitting his stature - although he didn't quite put it like that.Miss Carlisle insists that Captain Frawley fire Bradley if he doesn't take the job,but the Captain explains that he has no power to do so,because Bradley is freelance.

Later,as Slam is leaving,he is petsered by the eager Shorty Morgan once more.Slam has an idea,and Shorty has a job - guarding Rita Carlisle's poodle.He is rather deflated,but takes the job nonetheless. Taking the dog for a ride in the car,Shorty is ordered to stay and look after the poodle while Miss Carlisle goes to buy an antique she has seen in a shop window they were driving past.Shorty strongly advises against it,as they are in the toughest area of Chinatown.Shorty's warning is ignored.An hour passes.Shorty goes in the shop to investigate,only to be turned away by the oriental serving in the shop: "Velly solly,no see missy.You sclam!".Shorty frantically phones Slam from a nearby store to tell him of Miss Carlisle's disappearance.Slam is on his way.

It's at this point in the story that everyone starts to cast long,dark shadows.Atmosphere rules OK.

The Chinaman in the shop tells one of his lackeys to inform "the master" that Slam Bradley is on the way.Slam makes his entrance, living up to his name.He breaks a few things,and threatens the Chink to tell him where the girl is.Silence.Slam remembers that the Chinese have a superstitious belief that if their pigtails (hair woven into a single strand and tied back) are cut off,that they'll never join their ancestors.A knife and a threat have the desired effect - behind a curtain at the back of the shop is a passage that leads to the lair of "the honourable Fui Onyui",who has the girl."Fui Onyui! He's the toughest Tong killer in Chinatown!" exclaims Shorty."I think I can make him wiggle his ears",replies Slam.Great dialogue.Love it.

Slam pushes the Chinaman through the curtain first.His suspicion of a trap is proved accurate when the Chinaman falls back dead,a sword in his back.It had been suspended from the ceiling,ready to drop on the first person to pass through the curtain.They enter the passage,and just as they do 'Mimi' (the poodle) decides she can't let Shorty go

without her and follows.The lights go out.After stumbling along the passage,they come to a cave.(Don't ask me how you get a cave in the back of a shop - but it's a plot weakness you quickly forget,because it all adds to the great feeling of mystery and intrigue.) Mimi soon proves her worth by saving Shorty from falling into a deep pit.To get past the pit,the two detectives must crawl along a narrow edge.In this position,Slam doesn't see a hole open in the wall and a hand about to thrust a knife in his back - but Shorty shouts "Look out!" and Slam's lightning reflexes save him - he turns,grabs the arm and breaks it,with a loud "CRACK!".They reache the other side of the pit safely,but on

turning a corner - "Good gosh!".Shorty is bowled over by the shock of seeing a huge red dragon - only a luminous painting on the wall, much to his relief.They find a can of yellow luminous paint,and Slam has an idea.They climb up on some rafters and wait.Soon,a Chinaman comes skulking by,sword in hand.Slam drops some of the paint onto his back.Being luminous,Slam and Shorty are able to see the paint in the dark and follow the Chinaman at a distance,avoiding any more traps. They thus narrowly avoid being crushed by a boulder which falls near them.They then hear voices up ahead,a mob - Slam has another idea. He covers Shorty in the luminous paint.The mob of bloodthirsty Chinamen turn the corner to be confronted by a ghastly yellow apparition - Shorty.Temporarily stunned,un-moving,they are soon running for all they're worth,shrieking and wailing.Shorty is quite pleased with himself.

They explore further,to find a revolving panel in the wall. On the other side,a room with a "sleeping" Chink."Asleep nothing! He's drugged! D.ped!" says Slam.(A dope fiend - or drug addict,to use a more current term.) Slam dons the unconscious Chinaman's clothes,telling Shorty to wait there,and if he isn't back in fifteen minutes,to go for help.As Slam leaves,Shorty finds another door.

Meanwhile,Slam's search has ended.Looking down from a high balcony,he sees Miss Carlisle - and the feared Fui Onyui.The girl is tied up,her back bare,with Onyui threatening to unleash his torturers if she doesn't sign certain papers.She refuses.Slam makes his move, grabbing an overhead sash swinging down feet first,knocking Fui Onyui over.He leaps towards the torturer,grabs his whip and gives him some of his own medicine."Higher! Y'fish-face! amoeba! Jump higher or I'll beat the hide off you!" Slam turns to some serious fighting - wading through the band of murderous orientals,he grabs Fui Onyui and swings him by his pigtail.

While Slam is busy enjoying himself,Shorty is still exploring. He goes through the door he has found,coming upon a store room.A Chinaman appr oaches.Mimi decoys the Chink while Shorty gets on top of a packing case.Just as the Chink is about to bring down a hatchet on Mimi,Shorty strikes the Chink over the head with a plank of wood. Expecting more to follow,he finds some tar in the store room and spreads it all over the floor.

Slam by this time has floored all but one of the villains - the leader himself,Fui Onyoui,who escapes up the stairs onto the balcony - and through a door leading to the store room where Shorty has laid his trap.Slam and the freed Rita follow - to fing Fui Onyui AND Shorty stuck in the tar.Still,Shorty has proved useful after all, and Slam hires him on the spot as an equal partner,sharing everything. The oriental villain isn't so pleased - "I'll get you for this! No one can capture Fui Onyui!" Shorty - "Well,I did,so Phooie on Youie!"

Shorty gets the job,but Slam gets the girl - and she shows her appreciation with a passionate kiss.Shorty gets excited,"Hey,Slam! I thought you said we share everything!" Not everything,Shorty.

Rita would like to see more of Slam - but although Slam and Shorty love trouble,they don't love "women trouble"!

Yes,it had it all.The forming of a partnership that was to provide hair-raising thrills and hilarity.And promise of a high standard of story-telling and artistic ability.For a while,at least, that promise was lived up to.

Detective No.2 had Slam suspected of the murder of an old friend,who was actually killed by racketeers trying to force him to

a union so that other workers on a construction site would follow,allowing corruption to go on unchecked or interfered with.The story's climax is on a skyscraper under construction,hundreds of feet up,where two of the villains have taken Shorty as a hostage.One of them puts Shorty onto a rope and sends him flying out into space.Slam makes his appearance just in time - after climbing up the cable of the elevator in which the two had taken Shorty,he emerges just in time to catch his pint-sized assistant.Shorty is safe,but Slam slips - he manages to catch a girder,and is hanging on with his fingertips.One of the villains walks out on the girder to stamp on Slam's fingers.Thinking quickly,Shorty throws a bolt at the villain - he ducks,but loses his balance,falling to his death many stories below. The leader of the racketeers is also now in a precarious position,hanging on the end of a girder.Slam,now safe,and Shorty are sitting on the other end.Taking things easy,the ignore the racketeers cries for help.He panics, and confesses,so they pull him to safety.Another case closed.But two lives lost - that was the realism. Issue 3 has Slam and Shorty dodging the underworld for top secret information at the great Exposition,issue 4 found them in a whodunit at Hollywood.In issue 5, Shorty goes back to school to help catch a gang of spies.Issue 6 saw the detective duo trailing kidnappers to Mexico,and 7 had a series of murders by a "creature" from the sea at a seaside resort,which turned out to be a human in disguise to terrorise bathers.It was around this time that Shuster began drawing the villains entirely in silhouette every now and then,with good effect,and the backgrounds,though still not detailed,were really atmospheric.

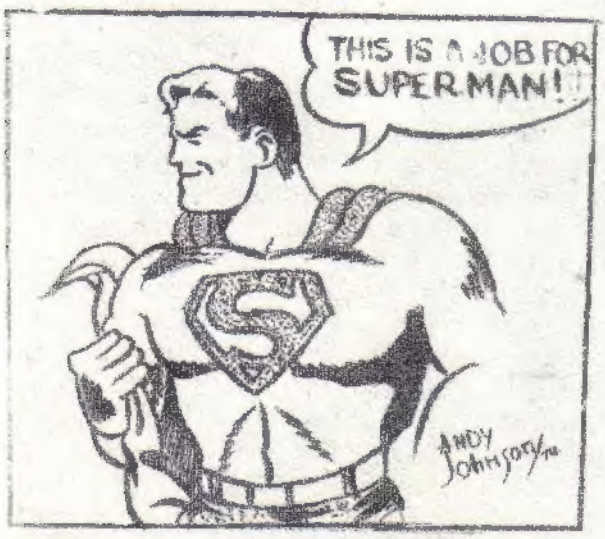
The Kentucky mountains were the setting in issue 8,with feuding hillbillies and Shorty almost getting hitched in a shotgun wedding to a homely daughter of a bank robber.Issue 9 had the nearest the strip had to a name villain,the Human Fly,a burglar so called because of his ability to scale tall skyscrapers to enter offices to steal large sums in cash and jewellery.It takes Slam to prove the crime was possible at all by emulating the burglar's feat of climbing a huge building with very little handholds.Shuster's drawings of skyscrapers are crude and sketchy,but brilliantly done - they look so tall,taller than you'd think they could be in one panel.This talent he used to great effect on Superman early on.

The stories didn't suffer from a lack of imagination in their locations - deep sea diving,the North Pole,in lumberjack country,on Broadway,shanghaied on ship,in Cairo and most other places in the world, even an adventure in a rocket ship.Issues 23/24 had probably their strangest adventure,in a time machine to a world dominated by strange plant men and bird creatures.Not that Slam Bradley was a science fiction strip.

By about issue 20,the art had changed a great deal - panels were much smaller,and the effect was quite claustrophobic.Although credited to Siegel and Shuster,I can't help thinking someone else must have been called in to assist in or even take over the strip, with Siegel and Shuster being so busy with the success they had on their hands in the shape of Superman.Certainly,the strip deteriorated completely soon after,deserving of its place as a filler.

But while at its peak,Slam Bradley had the best that DC comics could offer in the 1930s - action,adventure,detective and,more,fun! Oh for a return to that era of simple,unsophisticated,honest entertainment.Not much chance of that,though.

Me,I'm content to search comic history's archives to find gems like Slam Bradley,and let you know about them in articles like this. If you've any gems you've discovered yourself,and would like to see an article about - either write it yourself,or let me know about it. And keep searching - the Golden Age has plenty of gems still uncovered.



THE STORY BEHIND THE COVER

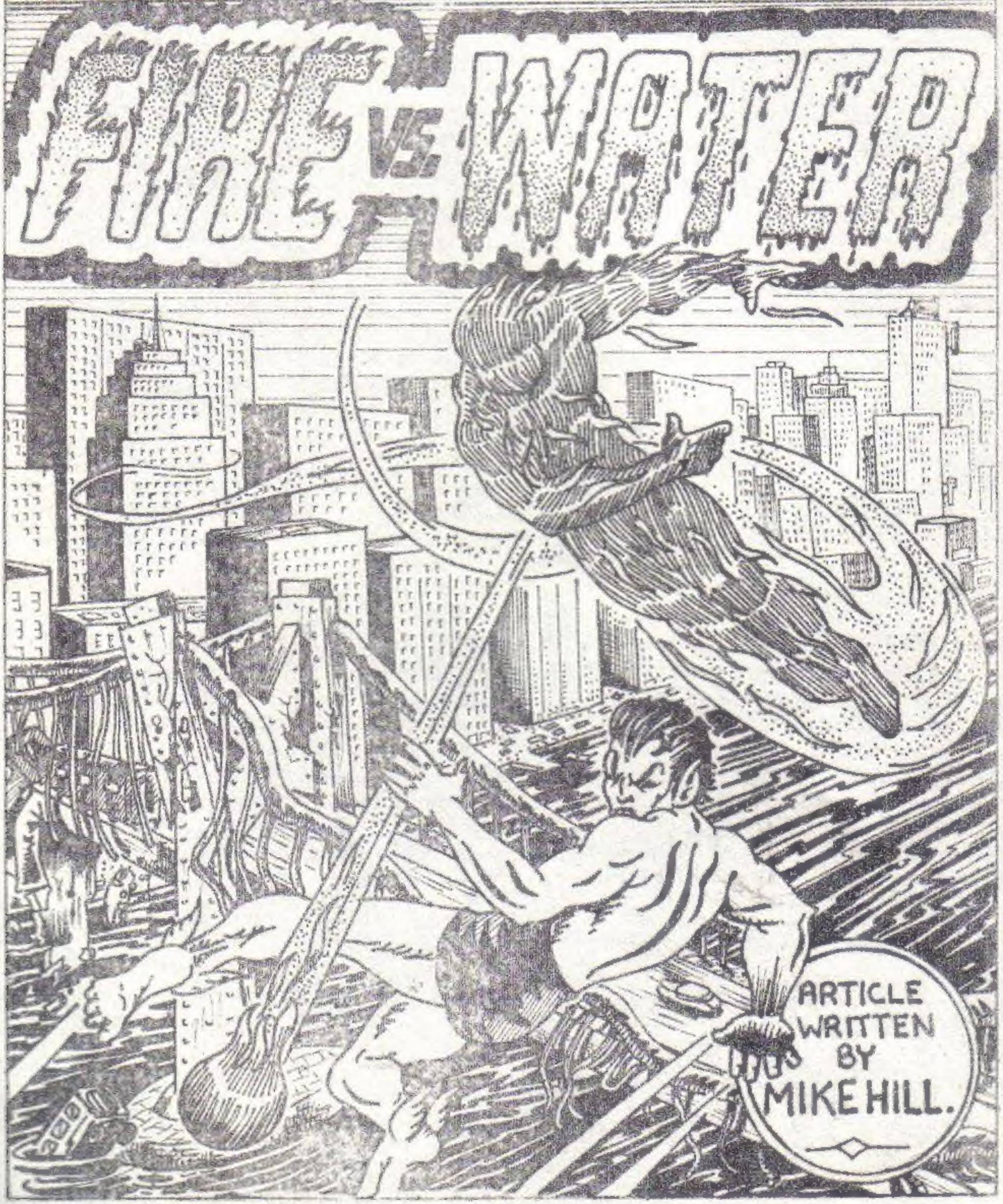
by Alan Austin

The back cover,that is. Which,if genuine,is the earliest known drawing of Superman that was drawn with the intention of it being published.

Explanation: According to one or two sources (one being Steranko's history of Comics Vol.I), the year of Superman's birth was 1933 - in the minds of Siegel & Shuster.The drawing on the back cover says otherwise.From that, one would assume Siegel and Shuster had conceived and developed

(continued on page 23)

THE HUMAN TORCH AND THE SUB-MARINER!!



The Battle To Save New York

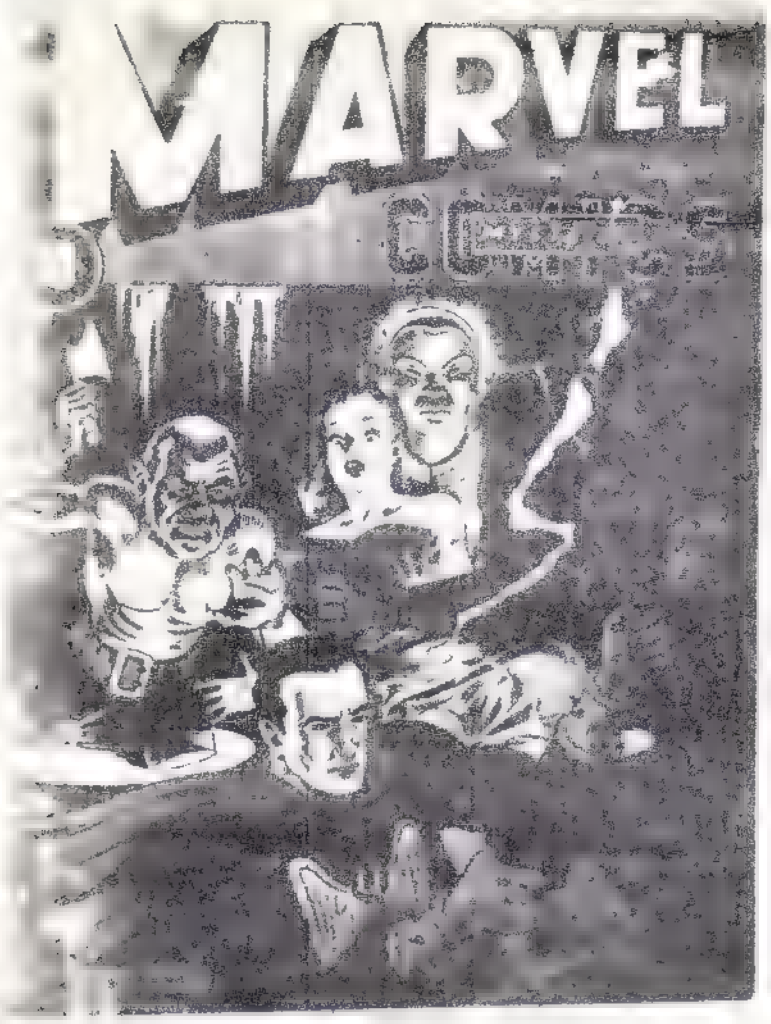
Before I start on the article, I'd like to rectify a mistake I made last ...e. I mentioned about Carl Burgos and Bill Everett writing a page each of ...rt in Marvel Mystery Comics No. 5. I relied on my memory for this whe... I ...uld have checked up, it was in Human Torch No. 1 in which they appeared. ... ...e HT 1 seemed to have been a bit of an odds and ends magazine, put toget... the last moment since Falcon, Micro-Man, Mantor and Fiery Mask never ...eared in number two, although it had 2 pages of text about Burgos, Eve... ...an Torch and Sub-Mariner. Now for the article.

I'll start where I finished the last one off. The Human Torch story you' ...bably read in Fantasy Masterpieces No. 11, which reprinted it exactly. ... ...ariner story starts off with SM having been sighted swimming off the shore ... Manhatten. Two people are reading about it in a newspaper, also noticing ... ...ticle about Fifth Columnists (spies) sinking battleships in Baltimore.

That night in Baltimore, Namor, disguised as a deckhand also reads the article. Slipping off his coat and hat Namor dives into the harbour to ...vestigate and finds a U Boat on the bottom. Passing the sub crew (going to ...eir ship) as he goes to shore he is in time to hear two navy men talking ...bout the launching of the 'Arkoak' next day. Namor believes that the saboteurs will strike there and decides to stand-by with his fleet of super aerial-sub-marines. The S.A.S. arrive as the launching takes place and they are in time ... see the ship sink instead of float as it leaves the ramp at the Navy Drydock. ...ix of Namor's 'planes' lower super-magnets on long cables and fasten onto th... ...ilding ship, then they rise upwards, not only pulling the ship to the surface ...gain, but lifting it clean out of the water. Namor flies down and despite gun ...inted at him, gets them to clear the Drydock from which the ship was just ...unched. Moments later the 'planes' deposit the ship back where it was ...riginally.

Meanwhile, Namor has left a note letting the Naval Officers know that he ...nts 3 men in a torpedo boat waiting for him at Pier 18 at 9 O'Clock that ... ...ight and he will get the saboteurs for them. This they do, and Namor finds ...hen the sub on the harbour bottom, however the Naval men are dubious about ...ing depth charges on it since they are not at war with Germany yet. Namor ...bliges and dives overboard, unfortunately the sub has moved and the depth ...harges miss it. Namor decides to handle it using his 'plane' and super-mag... ...hich when fastened to the sub's hull is sufficient to beach the sub leavi... it high and dry. A call to the coastguard follows.

Now to Marvel Mystery Comics No. 12. Torch decides to see the Police Capt... ... see if he can get any information on J.B., however, he can't approach him ...ly because he is wanted for arson for burning down the tenement block ...fested with Black Plague. The easiest way to do it, he realises, is to grab ...sbestos suit off one of the Police hunting him (armed with pressure guns). ...his he does and goes to see the Captain. The officer explains that his hands ...re tied over J.B. and his organisation, but if the Torch can get him he'll ...-instate the Torch on the Police Force. However, it turns out that his ...nversation has been overheard by a crook who reports to J.B. about it. Acting ...on this the crook alerts the Police to the Torch's presence and they corner ...im in a lift shaft, still wearing the asbestos suit. The suit heats up also, and ...comes untouchable. Torch peels off the suit and flies through the top of the lift. He finds the crook, whom he recognizes as Ginalli, a criminal lawyer, and ...K.O.'s him. He finds a message on Ginalli which reads:



MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS No. ? Jan. 40

"WARFARE ROAST PLANT TOP TEMPRESS TONIC KRANTZ"..... The message is signed 'J.B.' Using a dictionary Torch finds in Ginalli's pocket as the key, he works out the message to: "WATERFRONT ROBBERY PLANNED FOR TWE TONIGHT KRANTZ. J.B.' Just then, the Police arrive and Torch tells them, "Try and me, Coppers !" (Abit of Sub-Mariner talk here.)

The torch escapes in a cloud of flame and smoke, then orders the flame out before it burns the building down. The Torch heads for the waterfront where the crooks are after the hundred grand pay-off of the Krantz Metal Company. The Torch arrives and starts fighting the gang, one of whom manages to signal, with a lantern, out of the window before it is reduced to molten metal by a flame from one of the Torch's fingers. A sheet of flame from the Torch's arm holds the men against the wall. Subduing his own flame, Torch waits for the thugs to arrive, not knowing that they are busy above him pushing a vault down on him. Flaming on, he leaps through the steel strong-box, goes through a hastily slammed door and jumps in front of the fleeing crooks, who naturally sees stars.

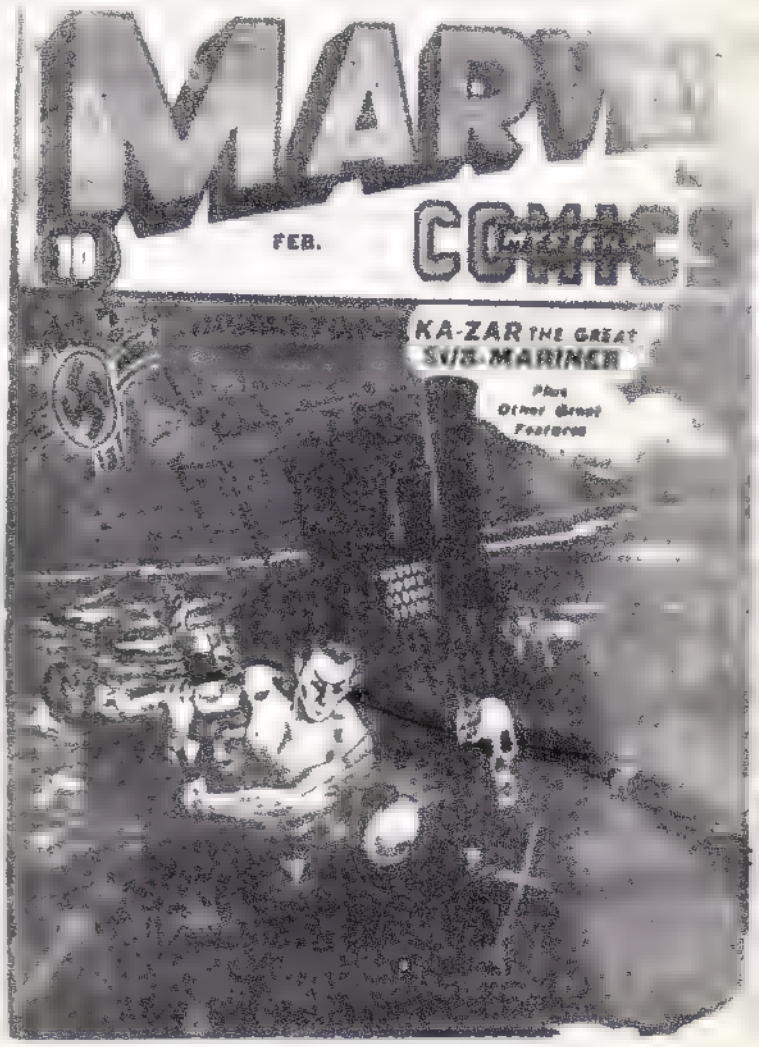
From a window the Torch sees a motorboat with Nick Bradley's daughter in it (he was convicted of graftin while in Public Office), Jane Bradley....J.B.!!! The boat leaves, Torch follows, a power dive by him makes the villains jump overboard just time to be pick up by a Police launch. J.B. confesses and Torch is back on the Police Force again.

Now for submariner. You may remember the story in Marvel Mystery Comics No. 1 ended with Namor allowing Lather Robinson, Lynne Harris and the first mate, Ginali, to escape. Namor is busy talking to Princess Fen, his mother, who thinks that Lynne Harris would have made a good date for him. Namor here mentions that he is only three quarters American, by blood. Just then they are interrupted by one of the Palace men who tells them that he has been told that the plane the Americans had escaped in has been forced down 15 kilometres from No. 203 look-out. Convinced by his mother, Namor goes after it with his private Grenadiers in a jet-propelled aerial sub. They soon spot the crashed plane and dive to search the victims, but there's no-one there. Namor thinks they have drowned and the search party returns.

On their return journey they spot a 'white man's' sub and decide to investigate. They both submerge and Namor swims to the sub. (Note here; he is wearing

royal uniform, a jacket of the same kind and boots which come up to hi[s]. His first in command is called Folma). Namor pushes them to the sur[face] using his mighty strength and his men smash open the hatches and pour thr[ough] their steam guns. Namor rescues Lynne Harris then lets the Nazis [get] their way. As he leaves a battleship appears on the horizon and he decides [it's] time round for the battle.

The British destroyer fires on the sub, then at Namor's 'plane' while [hoping] that he is part of the sub's convoy. A hit by a torpedo doesn't [sink] the destroyer, but as their deck guns score a direct hit on the sub. Namor, [determined] on the unprovoked attack, turns on the destroyer with clouds of [boiling] steam. The ships start to keel over from the torpedo hit and one of [Namor's] 'planes' is hit by the still [firing] deck gun and goes down in [flames]. Another British cruiser [arrives] to pick up the survivors (in [lifeboats]) and Namor calls the humans fools because of their wars. Lynne Harris calls him a killer, reminding him about all of Luther's men he killed and even leaving Luther on the U-Boat, being responsible for his death. Namor isn't interested in the lives of humans.



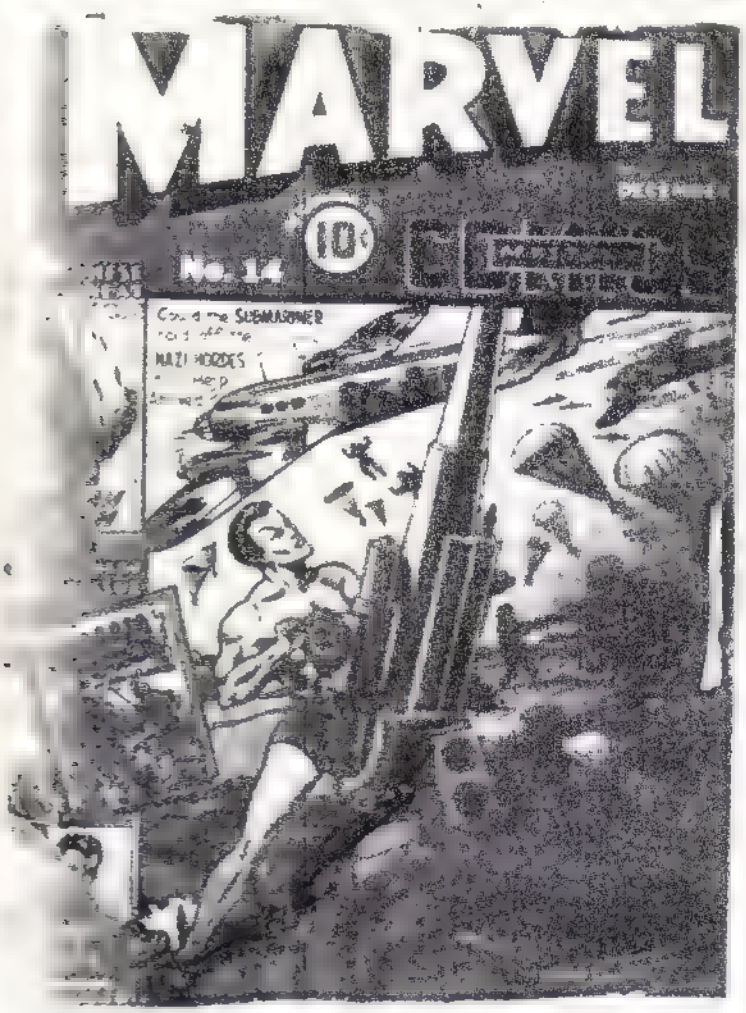
Lynne Harris is horrified when she realises she is to be the wife of the Submariner. He tells her that the scientists of his someland will treat her to protect her from heat and cold and will perform an easy operation to enable her to breathe underwater. Meanwhile he gets Folma to give her something to protect her from the cold for a few hours. The effectiveness of this is proven when she jumps into the freezing cold waters of Namor's homeland with him.

In the Ice Castle she meets with Princess Fen and Namor's cousin Dorma, then the doctors. She is readied for the operation and after an hour on the table she is able to breathe under water. She is then put in a weird machine which freezes her in a block of ice to give her the ability to withstand high and low temperatures. Suddenly Luther enters, a hand grenade shatters the ice block, and he causes the unconscious girl to be removed (he apparently has survived the sub sinking and being rescued by the British cruiser). Outside he is picked up by a motor launch, transported to the cruiser and they leave the vicinity of the Ice Palace quickly. As Namor recovers he realises that Lynne has gone again.

Marvel Mystery Comics No. 13. A split rail sends the Subway Express hurtling through space, crushing its steel lined body against heavy support beams. This is the fourth in two weeks and the Mayor orders Police Chief Rawlings (from ish. 11) to get to the bottom at all costs. It turns out that the passengers are

[illegible] to call the Human Torch in on the case. He is summoned to Police H.Q., where the Torch is dressed in his Police uniform. They are talking when the [illegible] lunges for Rawlings. As he falls a knife narrowly misses him. The [illegible] a note pinned to it which tells the Police not to investiaget the Subway [illegible]ks or they will ahve a worse terror on their hands. Torch rushes [illegible] window and is in time to see a man sliding down a rope outside and getting [illegible] subway car. Torch follows the car and whil travelling at full speed he suddenly feels the roof get warm. The crook is right; the Torch has landed on the car top and panic sizes him. He crashes into a lorry. As it turns out it was only a thrown fireball on the roof. With the lorry driver the Torch surveys the car wreckage and from one of the crooks finds out that the next job is the 4.30 South-bound express, today ! It is now 5.20, so Torch rushes to stop the train. He catches it at 5.25 as it leaves the station, in the last carriage. He rushes through the carriages to tell his information but too late. The express crashes and the injured rise from the wreckage, only to be ruthlessly machine gunned by masked men.

The Torch recovers and climbs out of the train. A killer thinks he is an easy victim, but looks on in horror as the Torch flames on. The would-be-killer's bullets melt before they reach their target. Torch knocks the killer aside and goes after the others. However, he has to flame off since his incredible heat is melting the tunnel walls. Hammer-like fists pound the killers until he is grabbed from behind, while another killer knocks him out from the front. The crooks vanish through a door in the side of the tunnel with the girl and some women passengers.



The Torch is dumped with an old man, Maton, the Subway builder. [illegible] tells how both his sons were killed when the Subway was being built. Their crushed bodies, not recovered, were left down here. Maton thought of revenge and built the chambers they were now in to wreck the trains. This was so that they would be abandoned and his son's graves would never be disturbed again. Marton then hired a gang of thugs to help him, but they turned against him, leaving the present results.

Using very careful control of his flame, Torch melts the chains (being careful not to melt the tunnel and bring down the river above on himself, Maton, and the captive girls held by the crooks, led by a man named Reiss). The Torch then melts through a wall, but has not got his flame on so the crooks shoot at him, but the bullets melt as they touch him. Torch takes care of the thugs, but Reiss escapes up an escape tube. Torch follows up to the river. Reiss

i getting away in a motor boat and a fog is rolling up. Torch follow
t ugh the fog and crashes into a steel girder of a bridge, nolsin; iv.
f suddenly lifts and the Torch spots Reiss from atop the bridge. He is
y under a dock and he stops to set light to it, using gasoline, in a bi
lay the Torch. The fire is subdued by The Torch with a mighty yell as a Poli
rch appears and chases Reiss. He lands the boat and runs along the dock.
rch appears and throws a fireball which fli s past Reiss, then begins to
reel. Reiss suddenly finds himself tr ppel in a cage of flame. Meton is
Police boat and is ready to pay his debt to society.

The Submariner story starts with Namor, his mother, and his cousi Dorm
lking about recent events. His mother, Princess Fen, advises him not to g
fter the escaped Americans again. Namor decided to follow adventure, an
rope where the surface war started. He asks Dorma to go and together they
the store-house to pick up some equipment. They get new uniforms, Dor
aring a suit of metal cloth, str g armour, while Namor tries on a mo
sk.

Later, looking lik something out of Buck Rogers, th y both head for
rface. Dorma mentions that h c n now stay out f the water indefinitely. Th y
surface near an island where the lo k-out takes them for sea serpents. On their
they are surrounded by armed soldiers and taken t the Gov rnor. Despite D rma'
rging, Namor decides not to break one of the guards into little pieces b cause
of his bluntness. The island is a French ba e. They get a fair hearing fr
Governor who decides to let them go. As they are leaving th air-raid sir e.

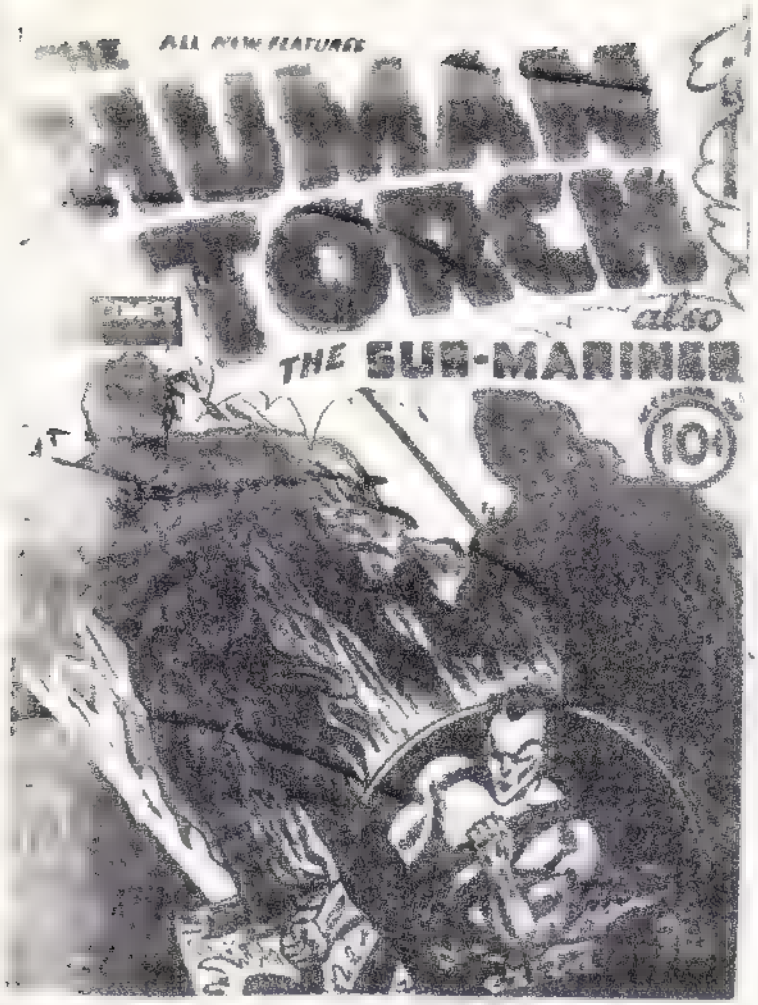
Anti-aircraft guns go into action as bombs are dropp d on the islands. Nazi
parachutists are released and begin landing. Namor decides to join the Fr nch
and flies up to meet the oncoming parachutists. D rma helps on the ground with
scalding steam from a hand pistol. Meanwhile, Namor take over one of the
bombers with machine-gun fire, two fall in fl me, the r finally h leaves th
ship to crash at sea, unpiloted. He arrives back in time to save Dorma fr
Nazi's bayonet, her steam-gun empty. He then uses the fallen Nazi as a clu
the others.

As he finishes, a flaming plane is going to crash onto the island. Namor
decides to save it so he can question some of the parachutists. They are taken
as prisoners of war.

The cover of Marvel Mystery No. 14 had an ad. for the first issue of Human
Torch. The main theme was Submariner using an anti-aircraft gun and Nazu para-
chutists landing all around him. It would have been more suited to the previous
issue instead of the Human Torch cover it had. The inside of the front c ver
also contained a full page ad. for Human Torch No. 1.

The Human Torch story starts with a bomb thrown through a mansion window by
two Tibetan Lama's who have followed the mansion's owner half way around the
World to keep his promise to destroy him. Torch and Toro are cruising around in
their police car nearby and decide to investigate. Torch spots the two Lamas
hiding behind a tree and thinks the best way to get them out into the open is a
fireball through the tree. He throws one, the Lamas are amazed and one catch
the fireball and examines it. He ascertains that it is real fire. The Torch is
shocked to see the lama throw it back at him.

Torch decides to leave them and take care of the burning mansion first. He
leaps on and enters it. As he does this one of the Lamas claps his hands and
utters incoherently as if praying. The flame in the mansion turns a deep blue.
Torch orders the fire to go out, but instead it grows stronger. He decides to
show it who is master and melts his way down to the basement and sends shot
bolts of flame over the entire basement. A mighty leap and from the vantage



HUMAN TORCH NO. 1

point of above the house he covers the building with sheets of flame, then orders both his flames to cover on the mysterious blue flame, whic is squashed and goes out. Torch t instructs his own flame to go out. As he lands Ronald, the mansion's owner, arrives and tells Torch of strange story about how he stumble on a forgotten cult of Fireh i Tibet. He had learned their sec just as The Kalif, one of the la steps into view and tells The Tor about how Ronald had broken th scared laws by threatening to his powers on his own civilisatio . Kalif produces a fire whip and its flaming strands on Torch an Ronald. Torch manages to break fr but too late to save Ronald or catch Kalif. His fellow officer has b knocked down by the two lamas, but s now recovering. A note is found mentioning 'The Temple of the Flame'. They decide to investigate, the Torch now having no Police uniform, it probably having been lost when he flamed on.

At 'The Temple of the Flame' a trap is prepared for Torch. Suspecting foul play, Torch melts his way in through a stone wall. He encounters some difficulty and begins to suspect that some chemical has been mixed into it. He finds Kalif, who tells him about half-human monsters which Ronald has released from the centuries-old traps of the FireMen, their enemies, to prey on civilisation. Torch doesn't believe him and decides to take him to Police H.Q. Kalif gets a lock on him, Torch flames on, but Kalif still holds on. A sand machine powered with some lamas and specially treated sand is sprayed at the Torch, and the flame goes out.

Torch is dropped into a pit to face a fire monster, a huge green human shaped creature with only one eye. Torch lodges his lungs but is trapped in a corner of it. The fire monster shoots small tongues of fire at him from its pores. Torch flames on and hits the beast which is bewildered and starts to retreat. Torch follows and then corners it. He bursts into a fan of flame aimed at the beast. Split seconds later he forms together again as The Torch. (This doesn't fit in along with his origin of being an android with flaming skin instead of real flame). The monster dead, Torch decides to join Kalif against the other fire lamas. Story continues in Marvel Mystery Comics No. 15.

The Submariner story begins with the captured Nazi parachutists being taken to the cells. Namor decides to question one and goes there in full battle dress. The Nazi is flippant and smirks at Submariner's 'Silly costume'. Namor takes his mask off and reveals his face and the German is suddenly reduced to practically jelly ! He has heard rumours of how Namor breaks men into little pieces and

. ..s them to die in agony. He decides to talk.

Following the information given by the Nazi commander, Namor swims t a li d ... similar ... twenty miles from the coast of Florida, w... is a small ... rt U-Boat base. Dorma has been ordered to ... t a fleet of aerial subs under ... command of Lieutenant Fol... and bring them to the Caicos Islands, twelve ... from the secret base.

Waiting till dark, Namor knocks out the guard and takes the l... ... t drum of steel cable and jumps into the bay with it. Thi... he ... rudders of the subs and ties it to a giant rock on the floor of the ot... of the bay.

Back ashore, he breaks into the arsenal, the lock on the steel door yi... his vice-like grip. Taking a pack of half ... he finds, he ... cover where he can spend the night, falling a... ... blast of deadly steam.

At dawn, smoke on the horizon, Dorma's signal, tells Namor that the he... arrived with the fleet, and he puts the first part of his plan into operation. ... grenades explode, causing panic in the barracks. Namor then swims to the waiting fleet. He joins them and tells Dorma of his plans as they are headed back to the island (the one with the Nazi base on.) with the fl... He ... the steel cable from the giant rock and ties it to the end of his aerial sub and pulls the subs away. Their crews are unable to prevent it. They abandon the sub to Submariner, who beaches them on the French island and leaves them in their hands. At the end of the story he decides to have one more look at the States again.

The cover of Marvel Mystery Comics No. 15 shows a huge tunnel with soldiers and tanks pouring through it. Tied to one of these is the Submariner. They are following a sign "U.S.", pointing to the States. Torch is blazing his way through the tunnel roof although I don't see how this is possible since not only is it an ocean tunnel, but another sign indicates the depth to be 25,000 feet ! Almost five miles of ocean is between then and the surface.

On the inside front cover is an ad. for M.M.C. 16, which is a bit of a con. since it is worded to look like there is a big Human Torch/Submariner against the Nazis adventure in it, but it is only a lead-up and they don't join forces until issue 17. Incidentally the cover was by Schomburg, who could do a good Bill Everett Submariner and good Carl Burgos Human Torch. A pity he didn't do a lot of inside work for Marvel. Date is January 1941.

[illegible] of the flame monsters to break into a jewellers so they can loot it. Torch is [illegible]d since the only witness, a night watchman is dead, and the way the steel [illegible]s are melted looks like the Torch's work. Torch hears that he is wanted o[illegible] TV in the Fire Temple. Just then Culflam enters and says that he has bee[illegible] talk. Torch realises it was a fire monster who did the job and only tw[illegible] control them. These two must be either Kalif, who has been with the Torch [illegible]ht, or Culflamm who must have been the crook. Culflam leaves, he decid[illegible] rid of Torch because he realises that he suspects him. He and his henchm[illegible] the fire monster out of the truck and it goes mad, but is controlled wi[illegible] hurled by Culflam. The reason they find it the sight of the dead fi[illegible]ster that the Human Torch killed last issue.

Torch visits Police H.Q. and tells his story. In stumbles a watchman wh[illegible] of a monster breaking into the bank where he works. This confirms To[illegible]ry. The watchman is shot by a sniper before he can tell more. Torch th[illegible] through murder and heads for the Flame Temple via the window which h[illegible] her opening. At The Temple he finds Kalif dying, Culflam has admitt[illegible], Kalif dies in Torch's arms. The click of a trigger warns Torch and he fl[illegible] in time to melt Culflam's treacherous bullets. A chase ensues.

Meanchwile, in a densely populated theatre district one of the fire monst[illegible] is loose. Bullets don't stop it. A policeman tries and is smashed to a pulp. Police fire at it from behind one of their cars, but the monster smashes th[illegible] the car with a lamppost it has ripped up. Torch arrives, the monster throws a car at him, but he burns through it. He melts the asphalt under the monster's feet, causing it to slip when it tries to chase him. Torch attacks and they fight on a Subway grill which melts under their heat. The monster falls to its death on the high voltage of the third rail, but the lighter than air Torch doesn't fall, but [illegible] after the second monster which has just looted the Federal Reserve Bank. Torch surrounds the monster with bands of fire and kills it with exploding fir[illegible]balls thrown with machine-gun power at its chin. He then melts the getaway car in half from back to front. Two crooks scatter, but are stopped by the fire balls. Torch chases Culflam to a dead-end, but a vial puts the Torch's flame out. Culfl[illegible] attacks with a knife but is knocked about by the Torch. He surrenders and Torch takes him for his date with the 'Hot Seat'.

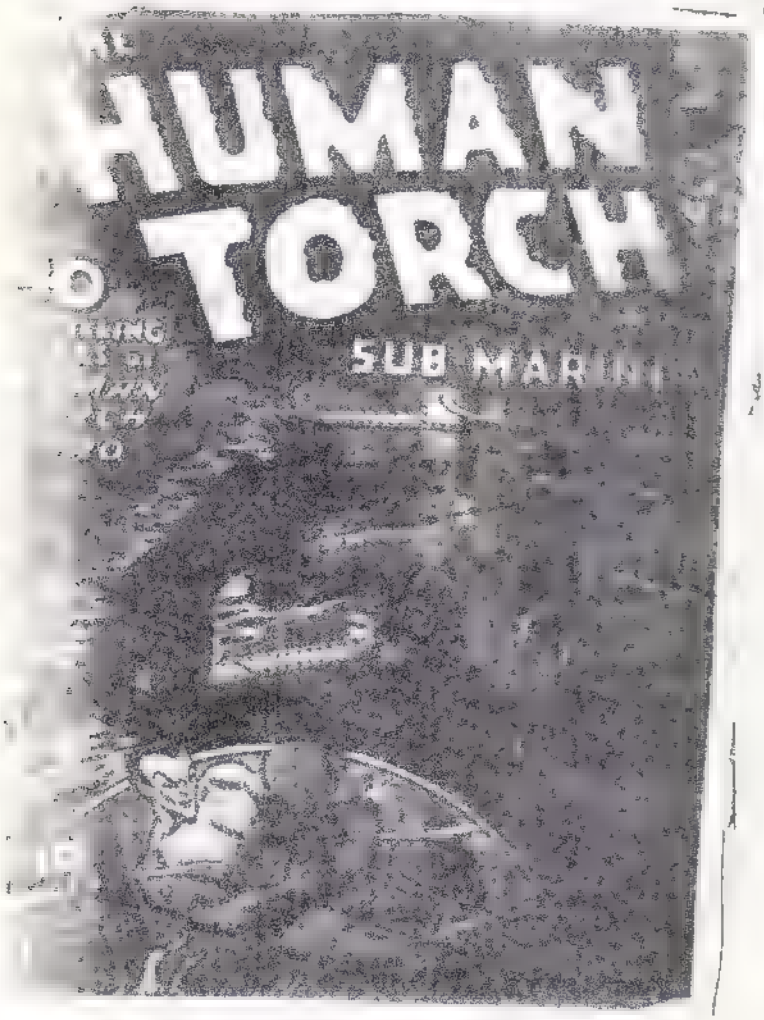
Submariner has left for New York promising to return within a week with hi[illegible] future bride...Lynne Harris. At that moment the girl in question and Luther Robinson are in an apartment uptown, talking about another expedition to captur[illegible] Namor.

On the docks in New York Namor is tackled by a Policeman. Namor goes lightly with him and only K.O.s him. He borrows his uniform and finds Robinson's a[illegible] in a telephone directory. Not suspecting anything, Lynne Harris answers the [illegible] and is shocked to find Namor there. Robinson tackles him but is slung aside like a rag doll. As Namor takes off his coat Lynne Harris darts for a draw and pulls out a gun and shoots at Namor, a near miss, and he slaps her sufficiently hard to drop the gun and fall to the floor, stunned.

Namor snarls here (Bill Everett had a way with expressions, and this snarl [illegible] up all Namor's contempt and hate of the human race,) as he tells them the facts of life, how he got soft-hearted twice and let them go, but no more. [illegible] away from the Submariner. Lynne Harris has been prepared to survive in the Submariner's city and he intends to take her as his bride. He tells Luther he'll execute him here and now unless he wants to come peaceably and undergo the operations too. Luther decides to play along with Namor and putting on one of Namor's suits and hat, Namor and the other two leave the apartment for Lut[illegible]

new yacht (a huge liner) where they will steam out to open sea and be met by

Namor communicates with [illegible] by mental telepathy leading them to the boat. three passengers are transferred and go to the Ice Castle. Here Luth[illegible] in to the operating room and operated on. An hour later he 'comes up' from effects of the Ether and seeks his chance. He stabs a doctor in the back with scalpel (it's shown dripping with red blood; I always thought they had [illegible] of different blood). H[illegible], and Lynne Harris, escape but they are are detected abm rirer who, with Folan, give chase. Able to survive under the freezing water of the Antarctic, Luther and Lynne take the underwater passage to the sea. Namor takes the short cut over the ice wall and arrives as they get on an ice floe. He dives at Luther who throws his uninjured Julo, and the [illegible] into the water. Namor escapes a stranglehold and K.O.s Luther. He is hoisted back onto the ice floe [illegible] Lynne confirms her anger and confronts them. Namor half apologises for his behaviour, saying that [illegible] has to marry her as it is his mother's wish. Luther, realising [illegible] is beaten, gives in.



HUMAN TORCH NO. 2 1940-1

Now to Human Torch No. 2, dated Winter 1940-1. This is virtually a 60-page story, two twenty-page chapters of Human Torch and one twnety-page story of Submariner. Both stories are connected, as you'll see.

The Human Torch story begins with Torch teaching Toro how to master his flame. Not far away the head of a large spy ring has read about Toro. A few short weeks later a treacherous scheme has been hatched. A car driver calls at Pop's Circus and Toro is seized. Torch is attracted by Toro's yelling and wades in. A badge and legal papers are flashed into his face, he subsides. The papers are apparently proof that Toro's parents are alive. Toro wants to believe this story and goes in the car, totally disregarding Torch's advice. Torch is sceptical while Toro is conducted to his "parents" (a pair of disguised spies) in a nearby penthouse. Torch flies through the window and accuses the spies of being impostors. The "father" swings a cane at him, Torch ducks, and grabs hold of the cane with flaming hand. The "father" falls to the floor, pretending to be hurt. Toro, taken in by the spies starts shouting at The Torch, who leaves, apparently washing his hands of the entire business.

Toro's parents tell him that he's not going back to the circus and instead he's going to join the Junior Liberal Club, a patriotic organisation. Toro rebels [illegible]. Later he is clothed in a suit and leaves to join the club with the spies

...k ar... to his 'parents'. Torch follows and enters the ware... . He recognizes Luding, the Saboteur. When Toro goes into the room the ... pretend an initiation and blindfold Toro. They take him out. Toro ...while, decides to investigate closer and makes all the lights in the r... ...e, leaving it in darkness. He takes a set of plans from the table and ...s the room. A glance tells him all, and he traps the spies in a cage ...me. He then leaps off after Toro.

...e spies tell Toro to flame on and run straight forward until they tell ...top. He is still wearing the blindfold (asbestos?) and does just that, ...through the high tension fence around a munitions plant and towards the ...ctive. Torch stops him in time and takes the blindfold off. Toro reali... something is wrong, but is still stubborn. Torch takes him off to tan... ...e and then they fly off to see whether the club is a phoney or not. How... (who was originally called K4 on his first appearance) phones ahead and th... ...ies put on an innocence act.

While they are all together, K9 bursts in on the scene, gun in hand, and ...p for the traitor, flame full on. Torch steps between them, his flame subd... ...proceeds to K.O. K9. Luding runs to a corner of the room and upsets a hug... ...et of kerosene which bursts into flame when Torch's foot touches it. The flame ...rps Toro's "Parents" so Torch instantly subdues the flame. Torch is suspicious ...their clothes aren't even burnt but apparently the "father" is dead. Toro i... blind anger rushes the Torch whose flame is put out by a blast of carbon di... ...oxide snow. Torch, his flame out, faces the fleeing Toro, a laugh on his lips. ...catches Toro or, in his battle with the new Human Torch, by simply ordering ...their flame off. G-Men arrive suddenly and arrest Torch for blowing up the ...munitions Works. Torch flames on and holds the Police and Luding at bay. However, ...battle of carbon dioxide snow makes him lose his flame again. Luding takes ...vantage by throwing a stick of dynamite at him. Toro burns off the light... ...e and Torch starts breaking up Luding, but is K.O.'d from behind by a co...er. They take Torch away and Toro gives them K9 as well.

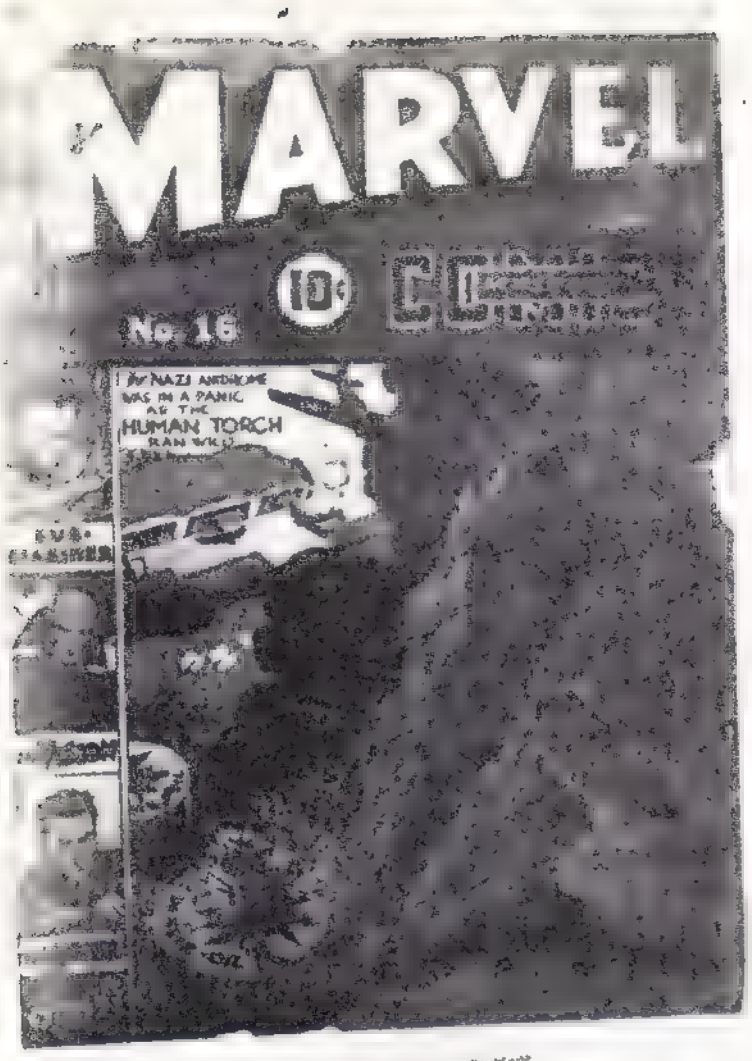
Torch revives in the paddy wagon and proceeds to overpower the Police Offic...r ...rather than have his hand boiled, K9 talks. The Officers thus get to know ...full story. Torch flames on and flies to the docks. He finds Toro's fake ...rents. Thanks to a seaman's intervention they escape to a boat nearby while ...ch finishes the seaman and follows. Exploding fireballs temporarily blind the ...rew and the Torch vanishes down the ship's funnel. The crew can't find him, but ...ro's fake parents are arrested (by the paddy wagon crew) and the villains ...decide to leave port.

Later a Police boat signals them to stop and they refuse to do so, so th... ...lice fire across their bow and the villains decide to torpedo the Police ...t.

Trouble down in the engine room!!! The meter for the boiler is well up into ...danger zone. Despite the stokers putting in less coal than usual the boiler ...is going to explode. The stokers run for it and from the bowels of the ship ...e....The Human Torch. Subduing his flame he goes on deck and is in time t... ...the torpedo rushing towards the Police boat. He flies after it and the ...torpedo detonates on contact with his flaming body and he is thrown away. The ...resulting water geyser puts his flame out. The villains on board laugh, thinkin... Torch has killed himself.

...d of chapter One. Full page colour reproduction of cover of Marvel Mystery Comics No. 16; "Hot Off The Presses". Chapter Two:

...d unconscious from the explosion, The Torch sinks slowly to the bottom of ...river, the villain's boat eludes the Police boat. Later, The Torch recovers



MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS No. 16 Feb. '41

and surfaces again (r[illegible]r, non-human. h[illegible]sn't bothe[illegible] being submerged.) The Police [illegible] picks him up.

On the spies' boat they get a telegram saying that Tor[illegible] 'parents' have been cond[illegible]d as traitors and sentenced to death. Torch meanwhile has flown af[illegible] ship and caught it up. He land[illegible] borrows th[illegible] clothin[illegible] of [illegible] is busy seeing stars. He i[illegible] inspect the cargo-hold whe[illegible] tells him that it is forbidd[illegible] takes a swing at hi[illegible]. Torch [illegible] and knocks him one, causing th[illegible] to fall down the hold and in [illegible] process upset several packing cas[illegible] Yellow material spills out of the split cases and on further inspection Torch sees that this is gold [illegible]. It appears that the spies are all smu[illegible]lers !

Torch melts th[illegible]old bricks [illegible] pours them out of the window, all but one, on which he writes a me[illegible] (with a flaming finger) which rea[illegible]: "Prince Namor. I need your help [illegible] Torch." He drops it into the sea. Meanwhile, a sailor has woken up deck in his underclothes so he [illegible] the Captain about the Torch. Th[illegible] are in the waters of their nativ[illegible] country; Slaveland ! The crew an[illegible] 'passengers' are evacuated in [illegible] small launch, except th[illegible] and the sailor whose clothe[illegible] stolen by the Torch. The Captai[illegible] boots him, saying that there is no room for unpatriotic citizens in Slaveland. He then blows the boat to pieces, committing suicide thus apparently killi[illegible] the Human Torch.

To get 'around' Toro, the villains make him a Prince in Slaveland and T[illegible] role is mentioned here. He is to use his Superflame to power the furnaces at since Slaveland is short of fuel. Torch is watching from the skylight and l[illegible] a bit of sabotage that night. Bayonets are shaped into scythes in his bl[illegible] swords, cannons into butter churns, and tanks into tractors. Bombs are turn[illegible] waste paper baskets, a final insult ! The villains enter and Torch leaves t[illegible] their problems. He has decided to visit the country's leader, Baby Hicc[illegible] (Wh.....?) He arrives there as a shiny limousine pulls up and out steps Herr Hiccup's right-hand man. Melals isn't too happy to see the Torch, especial[illegible] as his medals vanish moments later. He is even less happy when his outer cl[illegible] have a similar fate, showing green pants with yellow spots on.

Zooming into the palace via the walls, Torch tries to truss up a guard wi[illegible] his own spear, with great success, while he kicks the seat of his pants with [illegible] flaming foot. He then bursts in on Hiccup and Mussolein wh[illegible] are busy over [illegible]

[illegible] the countries. Before Hiccups can move a string of flame cut[illegible] reaches off his face and deposits it on Muscheim's bald head. Then, who [illegible] in but Herr Melals, with a new uniform. He decides that he's got an [illegible]intment elsewhere, but he's not fast enough and ends up bouncing down stairs a few at a time, bellowing every time he makes contact.

[illegible]nwhile, Toro has got the blame for the damage to the Munitions Facto[illegible] from beofre Hiccup, who in his anger hits him, and knocks him unconscious [illegible] his men take him to his Rocket-Cannon for a human projectile. Toro is [illegible] shell and is promptly launched. Torch, after taking care of Hiccup and [illegible]chein and the Cannon, chases after the projectile. It doesn't take Tor[illegible] to recover in the projectile, to find himself surrounded by ice. Natu[illegible] flames on, giving the missile a boost of power. The bomb is headed for [illegible] with Toro innocently powering it. Torch overtakes the missile and st[illegible] boing it. A brown mist shoots out, dowsing his flame, leaving him to fall [illegible] doom. Toro sees him and melts his way out through a porthole and zooms [illegible] save the Torch. Toro's flame fries Torch's skin allowing him to flame on [illegible]gain. Toro apologises for his behaviour.

Torch and Toro use explosive fireballs to attack a fleet of TV-controlled rockets which arrive. The rockets head for the duo, who swerve and burn holes through them. They then form a wall of flame and the remaining rockets melt as they go through it. Suddenly more of the same appear and are melted. Toro in his eagerness is going too fast to turn when approaching the mast atop of the Empire State Building and thus goes through it, sending a huge chunk hurtling to the streets below. Torch dives after it and melts it, only to have a rocket hit him in the back and explode, blowing the lighter-than-air Torch to safety.

In a fury, the Torch forms a figure of eight out of fireballs, rings it with a circle of flame to make an eight field and as the missiles approach yells. The 'ball' explodes, blowing up the fossil. The story ends with a few words about freedom and liberty.

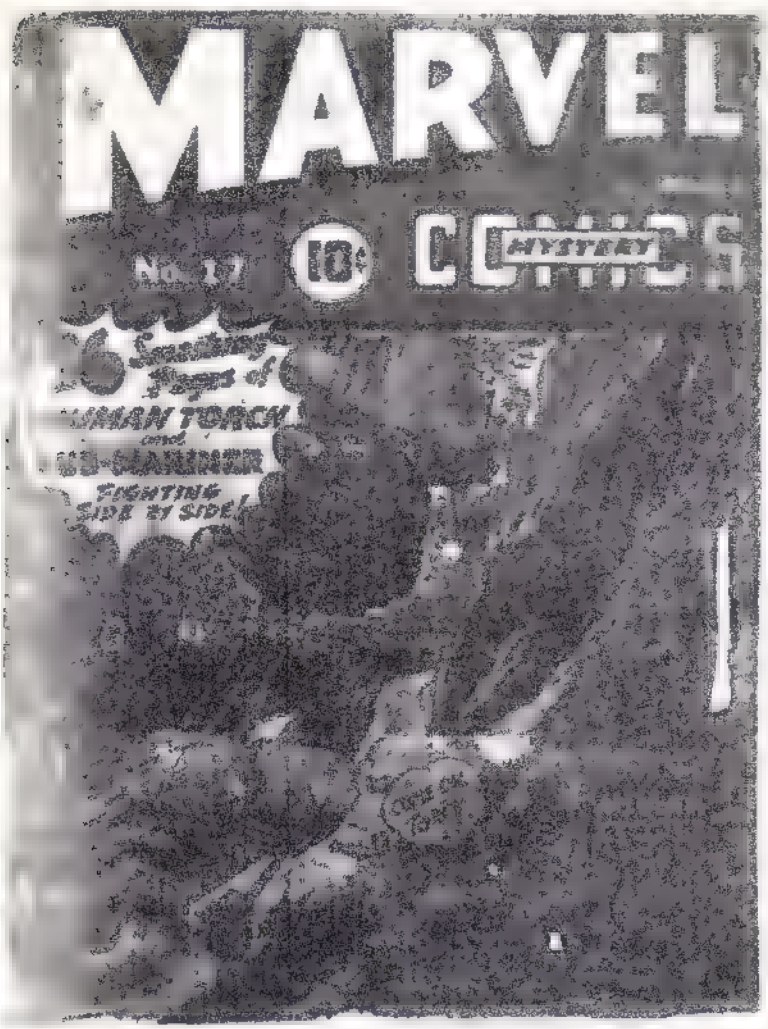
Next, a two-page text filler featuring Human Torch, Toro and Submariner arguing over who's the best artist, Bill Everett or Carl Burgos. A battle is the result and toro ends up seperating them. I don't know who wrote this, but I should hazard a guess at the toro-guy. About the only bit of light interest is where it mentions that Carl Burgos can draw with both hands, although Bill Everett is the faster of the two.

The Submariner story starts off with Namor swimming along to somewhere in a hurry when he suldenly notices the water is warm. He sees a large quantity of molten gold on the ocean floor and one gold bar. He picks this up and finds the message written by the Torch. (This appeared to be slightly different from that which was seen to be written in the previous story....amazing what sea water can do). Namor swims to the Battery, South Manhattan, in New York, with the gold bar and using a Police phone he says he wants Betty Dean to meet him at the Battery as soon as possible. Fifteen minutes later they meet. Betty mentions that although the Torch is a Cop like herself, she hasn't seen him for a couple of days. He's on an espionage assignment. Namor decides to direct his enquiries around the dockland region.

A foreign ship has just arrived so Namor borrows some clothes and boards it. He puts on a German accent and tells an officer that he wants a job. He doesn't see his press a buzzer, or does he hear the man sneak up behind him. A blackjack dances off his skull and he is subdued, mainly by the surprise of the attack. He is then gassed, tied to a bomb and heavy steel boots are put on his feet to prevent him using his wings. From there he is taken to a plane and the bomb is strapped to a wing and the plane takes off. The pilot releases the b[illegible]

...ch over Manhattan. Torch and Toro, flying around at the time, see this ... ...nwardly directed fireball melts the boots off Nam... ...s, the ... liquid metal (which runs of Namor's exposed skin...???), Namor uses his win... ...guide the bomb safely to the ground and Torch fr...s him from his bonds. T... ...ls Namor about their adventur... and Namor meets Toro for the first time ... (not counting that brand eech story earlier in the book).

Namor swims to the Ice Castle in the Antarctic and leav...s by night-fall ... ...fleet of battle ships (aerial subs). At daybreak they see a fl...t of crui... ...low on the surface so Namor goes down to identify them and is promptly ... ...by an anti-aircraft gun. His ship bursts into flame. Namor's fleet releases ...alling clouds of steam onto the cruisers . Namor's skin is impervious to h... ...and cold, so Namor flies through the scalding steam and finds a torpedo gun. ... fires a missile into the sea off the boat. He then dives in after it and ...tches up to it to send it back towards the same boat, thus blowing it ... ...pieces. This process is repeated time after time with unbelievable succ...s (don't believe it !). He then joins his fleet and goes back to the Ice Ca... ...only just arrives back when a message comes over the radio that Uncle ... ...wants him in Washington. "Holy Halibut !" exclaims Namor, and threatens t... ...Uncle Sam a bill for his services. However, he starts off, flying to New York, ...light pack on his back. He does the journey of many thousands of miles in ... ...hours.



MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS No. 17 March '41

In Washington, Namor finds he is to be decorated for his work on their behalf. A message arriv... of an expected invasion, within hours. The US government haven't got time to prepare, so Submariner is asked to save the country again. Reluctantly, he begins the long journey back again. Even as he drops to his homeland the Pacific Fleet is going through the Panama Canal to give a hand to their Atlantic counterpart. As the last ship sails through a series of explosions rocks the area, blowing up the canal, leaving the Pacific Ocean undefended. The enemy fleet is sighted in the Pacific and a radio message is sent to Namor fr... the helpless Admiral and they h... for the Panama Canal at full s... Their super-magnets carry the ... left by the saboteurs away.

Namor, with his fleet, then find a construction company to 'borrow' some of their largest scoops. ... fantastic speed the small aerial subs dredge out a new Canal. ... piece of land is left as a natural lock. He then radios the ships ... tell all the men to secure th... selves to anywhere and the fleet battleship finds itself picke... by the super-magnets of six ...

carri over the natural lock into the new canal. The others follow.

Namor's fleet then fly to where the enemy are steaming to the attack and chapel class containers are dropped to their decks. Detonation proves ..., it is found, a horrible unearthly vapour which instantly anything that it touches; wood, steel, iron....or flesh !!!!

From other vessels that were missed come the deadly chatter of machine the angry bark of one-pounders. Many of Namor's planes plunge into th in a wreath of flame. Reconnaissance planes take off from the enemy to fall into the sea. The deadly green mist has eaten at its vitals. time the American fleet has arrived and started using its big guns on ay, who succumb one after the other. Namor rescues survivors in life-boa ng his magnets to tug them out of range of the suction of the sinking sh fight is soon over, under a protective smoke-screen, the last few of th my ships slink away.

Namor ends up going to Washington DC where the President thanks him on b h the Nation and throughout America he is acclaimed as the Nation's Hero. Th course, is too good to last. There is a final panel asking the readers ho many would be in favour of seeing a 64-page Submariner book.

NEXT ISH:

* SUBMARINER GETS HIS OWN BOOK
* TORO JOINS TORCH IN MARVEL MYSTERY COMIC

* SUBMARINER TRIES TO DROWN THE WORLD AND ONLY THE TORCH, KA-ZAR (THE ORIGINAL ONE) STAND AGAINST HIM
* TWENTY SIX PAGES OF TORCH AND SUBBY TOGETHER AGAINST NAZIS

* PYRON AND TORCH AGAINST TORO AND NAMOR AND THE HUMAN RACE
* FORTY FIVE PAGES OF TORCH AND SUBMARINER TOGETHER

*AND SO MUCH MORE!!!!

(continued from page 8)

...ermen as early as 1938,ten years before his appearance in Action ...ics No.1,June 1938.Even more surprising,it would appear that Siegel ... Shuster had developed another concept,that of publishing a magazine ...l of comic strips.Remember,this is 1928 - before the comic book wa ...n.The layout and standard of artwork for this cover gives the impression that it was for a fanzine rather than a professional publicat..., though.Whether this ever appeared,I doubt.This reproduction is taken from ...print published around 1969 by U.S. fan Bob Beerbohm.He had been lo... original drawing for printing by Bill Gaines.Apparently,Bill Ga... found the drawings among his father's (M.C.Gaines,who played a la... part in 'inventing" the comic book) files,and didn't know the exact ...gins of it himself.I have contacted Mr Beerbohm recently to obtain further information but without success.

So,we still don't know when Superman was actually create... and ...re's also the interesting possibility that not only did Siegel ... Shuster create Superman,so very influential in itself,but that they ... may have provided the inspiration for the invention of the comic ... ...efully some light will be shed on this before too long.

NEW FROM THE GOLDEN AGE

BY MARTIN LOCK

Golden Age comics are nice, collectable things to have - - however, they can come expensive. Looking in the American Price Guide, for example, the cheapest All Star Comics are $20 a throw, and the first 19 issues over $100 in mint condition. So, nobody can go around collecting 1940s comics the way they do 1970s ones - - the only way to get a reasonable selection of Golden Age material without having a profitable sideline in bank robbing is to look out for reprints.

Last time, the main tip was to look out for DC's 100 page Super Spectaculars; titles like Detective, Batman, World's Finest, Flash and Action had some fine Golden Age material (especially Archie Goodwin's issues of Detective). If you missed any, keep your eyes open; if you're browsing, don't just look through the new material!

Happily, one book that continues to present a good quantity of Golden Age material is Warren's bi-monthly Spirit book, reprinting tales of Will Eisner's marvellous hero from the "Spirit Sunday Section", a weekly comic book distributed through American newspapers from 1940 through to the early 1950s. At the moment, the book only has fan "distribution" over here - but it's well worth looking out for.

But the 100 pagers have finished, and even the 68 pagers DC are running have very little vintage material. Batman Family No.1, though, had a fine 4 pager featuring the redoubtable Alfred as "The Great Handcuff King", drawn by Jerry Robinson; DC Special No.18 features an Old Beck and Costanza Captain Marvel tale that shows up all the new Big Red Cheese stories of the last year or so....no wonder Shazam's going all reprint soon! And don't forget the back feature in Adventure Comics at the moment, with an unused Golden Age script of the Seven Soldiers of Victory drawn by a fine variety of current artists.

That's slim pickings, compared with last year; but the dollar size does better, luckily. Let's list the over-size reprints of Golden Age milestone comics, in case you missed any:

C-26 Action No.1 (Superman, Zatara, Scoop Scanlon, Tex Thomson etc)
C-28 Detective No.27 (Batman, Crimson Avengers, Fu Manchu etc)
C-30 Sensation No.1 (Not only Wonder Woman, but also Shelly Moldoff's Black Pirate, Mr Terrific, Gay Ghost by Gardner Fox and Howard Purcell, Little Boy Blue and the Blue Boys, and Wildcat - quite a line-up!)
F.C. Whiz No.2 (Captain Marvel, Ibis, Golden Arrow, Spy Smasher, and others less noteworthy - "Dan Dare" even!)

F-5 Batman No.1 (Batman origin,two Joker stories)
F-6 Wonder Woman No.1 (some nice house ads...)
F-7 All Star No.3 (the first meeting of the Justice Society of America,with Flash,Hawkman,Spectre,Hourman,Sandman,Dr Fate, the Atom and Green Lantern in linked adventures)
F-8 Flash No.1 (Flash,Hawkman,Johnny Thunder etc)

The first five of these have full oversize reprints of the original cover inside the 'Famous First Edition' cover; unfortunately,the last three do not.F-9 is due soon,being the long awaited reprint of Superman No.1,which includes,as well as Superman's origin,a biography of Siegel & Shuster.Neal Adams has also been commisioned to help Shuster draw a special booklet,presumably to be given away with the reprint,telling how he and writer Siegel created Superman.One worth waiting for.

Other recent dollar books with Golden Age material are:
C-25 Batman (half Golden Age - Kane,Robinson and Sprang)
C-27 Shazam!
C-31 Superman (stories from 1940(2) and 1949,plus more recent tales)
C-34 Christmas with the Superheroes (1946 Shazam,undated Superman)
C-37 Batman (a fine selection,featuring Golden Age appearances of the Joker (1941),the Penguin (1947),Two-Face (a newspaper strip from 1946),the Scarecrow (from 1941),and the Catwoman(1948)
C-35 Shazam!
C-38 Superman (1946 and 1947 tales,and three from the sixties)
C-39 Secret Origins of Super-Villains (1950 Batman,1941 Captain Marvel)

If you thought DC were short of good Golden Age reprints,you should see Marvel! The now-scrapped line of Giant-Sizes did feature the occasional gem - Giant-Size Invaders No.1 had a 20 page Bill Everett Sub-Mariner tale from the Spring,1941 1st issue of Submariner - - and the cancelled (with No.8) Human Torch book features a 40s reprint each issue,plus a Johnny Storm reprint.

On the fan side,there is Alan Light's series of black & white interior,colour cover Flashback reprints,which were stopped with No 32,although Alan does intend to issue more in batches of four at intervals,provided they are more successful.Last time,I listed the first twelve of this series,the next twenty-one are:

13)All Star No.2 14)All Select No.1 15)Captain Marvel No.2
16)Pep No.17 17)Captain Marvel Jr No.1 18)Master No.1
19)Sub-Mariner No.1 20)New York World's Fair 1940
21)Human Torch No.1 22)All Star No.1 23)All Winners No.1
24)Spy Smasher No.1 25)America's Greatest No.1
26)Marvel Mystery No.4 27)Silver Streak No.6
28)World's Finest No.7 29)Captain America No.2
30)All American No.24 31)Hit No.1 32)America's Greatest No.7

A slight bias towards the Captain Marvel and family can be detected,perhaps -- 7 out of 32 -- but even if the selection can't be perfect,the idea is a good one.That is proved by the fact there are other series around in the same format; the one to grab if possible is Uncle Sam Quarterly No.1,68 pages of Will Eisner,but Police Comics No.1 (Plastic Man),Silver Streak No.1,Blackhawk No.9(first issue),and Air Fighters No.2 have found their way into my collection.Of course,none of these are going to crop up in your newsagent,but small quantities have come into the country,and do appear in comic shops and at comic marts,

usually at £1.50,sometimes less.

One small point from last issue's column; in it,I said that New York World's Fair Comics later became World's Finest Comics. While the basic concept was carried on from the two World's Fair issues, 1939 and 1940,World's Finest didn't carry on their numbering.Instead, it started with No.1 (titled World's Best for the first issue only) and has never looked back.

If you're interested in the pulp adventure novels being reprinted,I can report that,in America (and SF import shops),the first six Shadow novels,from the early thirties,are now out.They are:

1)The Living Shadow (1st pulp novel,April 1931)
2)The Black Master (8th " " March 1932)
3)Mobsmen on the Spot(9th " " April 1932)
4)Hands in the Dark (10th " " May 1932)
5)Double Z (11th " " June 1932)
6)The Crime Cult (12th " " July 1932)

All have Jim Steranko covers: another six are due shortly.Is it a mistake,the omission of the 2nd to 7th pulp novels,so that the paperback series skips from Vol.1 No.1 to Vol 2.No.2? Probably! Other series going are (of course) Doc Savage,latest being No.82,The Stone Man,plus the Avenger(now newly-written tales by Ron Goulart,as they ran out of pulps to reprint),Secret Agent X,and Operator 5.The Spider series isn't "pure" reprint -- instead,they've been up-dated to the seventies.A shame - but some powerful writing remains,if you can ignore the (editorial) butchery.

And so the second NftGA column draws to a close; let Alan know if you want a third.Reprints are the cheapest way to start collecting Golden Age material -- but,once the super-specs have given you the taste,and you've sampled the dollar books and the fan reprints,don't forget the genuine Golden Age comics.They may seem expensive,but don't worry,with a fairpricing dealer you can get some interesting comics for a fiver or less.Not always the major companies,of course -- but the lesser ones had someinteresting titles.

That's just some of the charms of the Golden Age - variety!

THE PHANTOM OF THE FAIR
SPECIAL ORIGIN ISSUE
BASED ON A STORY BY
– MIKE HILL.
DRAWN BY –
RUSS.
1

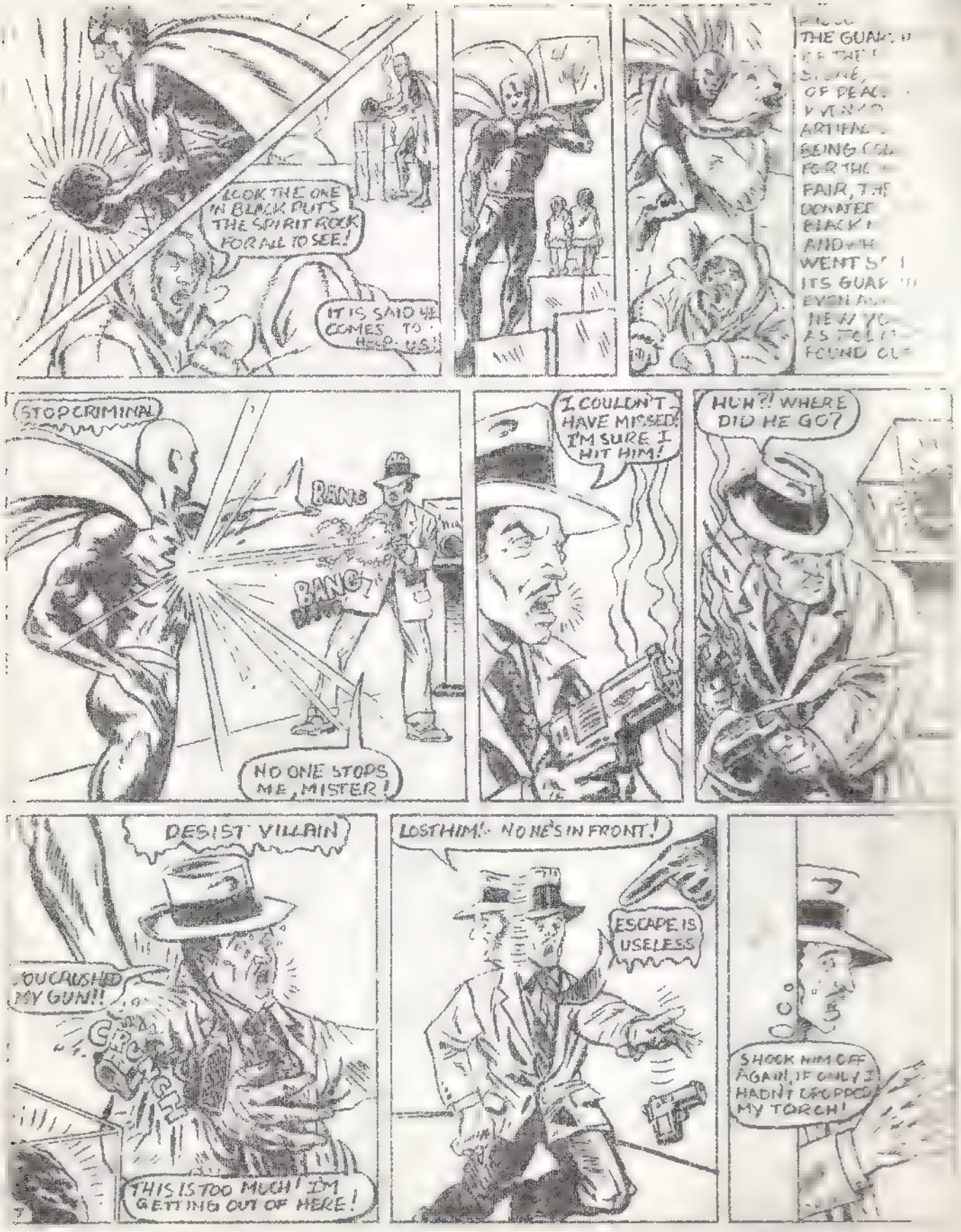
PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD COME TO VIEW SPECTACULAR HITS OF THE ARTISTAN. THERE YOU WILL FIND SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING SPACE RABBITS AND SOME TIMES... MONSTROUS CONVERSATIONS.
NOW THIS GENTLEMEN, IS ONE OF THE SPECIMENS, ETC.
NICE OF YOU TO LOAN US SOME OF YOURS
OOKS LIKE A COMMON BLACK ROCK, TO ME!
AH! A MERE EYE LOAN FROM A SMALL ARCTIC VILLAGE, FROM WHERE IT WAS FOUND
CARE TO LOOK CLOSELY?
OUCH! MY EYES!
WHAT'S THE STORY, PROF?
FROM THE VILLAGE'S POINT OF VIEW WE CANNOT FIND OUT WHY IT'S VALUED!
BUT! FROM A SCIENTIFIC POINT OF VIEW- VERY INTERESTING...
WE FOUND OUT IT COULD NOT BE CUT— IT ABSORBED HEAT...
NOT A SCRATCH!
ACIDS HAD NO EFFECT - ANALYSIS PROVED FRUITLESS
I CANNOT IDENTIFY ANY MATERIALS KNOWN ON EARTH!
NOT EVEN!
THAT'S THE TENTH DIAMOND DRILL BROKEN— AND NOT EVEN A CHIP!
IT JUST SITS AND DEFIES KNOWLEDGE!
OUR STRONGEST LASER HAS HAD NO EFFECT - IT COULD CUT THROUGH ANY
CUTS THROUGH ANYTHING? EVEN, SAY A STEEL BANK VAULT?
AH! EVEN THAT! WE TRIED AND SUCCEEDED!!
AT MYERS THIS IS YOUR LUCKY DAY! IT CAN CUT THROUGH A BANK VAULT! SHE SAID THAT ROCK'S IT'S MINE!!
THAT'S AMAZING!
OF COURSE, I WOULD LIKE TO ADD, THE EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO CUT THROUGH A VAULT DOOR, FOR INSTANCE, IS IMMENSE!
NOT VERY PRACTICAL, HUH? PROBABLY JUST AS WELL! SO WHAT'S NEXT TO SEE, PROF?

IGHT AT IT'S WORKSHOP
ALL QUIET
Y'H, NOTHING MOVING, STAN!
THOSE DUMB FAIR COPS COULDN'T SPOT SOMEONE WHO TRIPPED OVER THEM!
THIS LOOP'S A CINCH!
THERE IT IS! ROCK, YOU'LL ... TO MAKE JOE A RICH MAN!
NOW TO GET THIS CASE OPEN HUH! SOMEONE BEHIND ME!!
THE BLACK METEOR HAS A MYSTERIOUS GUARDIAN....
O.K. WHOEVER YOU ARE, SHOW YOURSELF! COME ON OR
THESE TWO GUNS SAY STEP OUT SHOOTER - OR BE BLASTED!
YOU ASKED FOR IT!!
BANG
BANG
WHO IS THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE ..AND WHERE DID HE COME FROM
TO FIND OUT ABOUT THIS MYSTERIOUS GUARDIAN OF THE BLACK METEOR WE HAVE TO GO BACK A FEW YEARS, AND NORTH TO THE VILLAGE OF KYENKO THERE A TYRANNICAL TRADER, BROUGHT TO THE VILLAGE BY A HUNTER HE SAVED, FORCED THE VILLAGERS BY BULLYING TO STOP HUNTING AND TRAP FURS INSTEAD, TO HIS ADVANTAGE, NOT THEIRS.
GET OUT OF HERE YOU OLD FOOL! NO FOOD - UNLESS YOU PAY!
BUT YOU HAVE NO FURS TO PAY WITH!
THEN TRAP SOME FURS! YOU'RE ARE JUST LAZY! I SET UP HERE AS A TRADER NOT A CHARITY!
WE DEPEND ON YOU FOR FOOD SINCE YOU FORCED US TO STOP HUNTING LE BOU!!

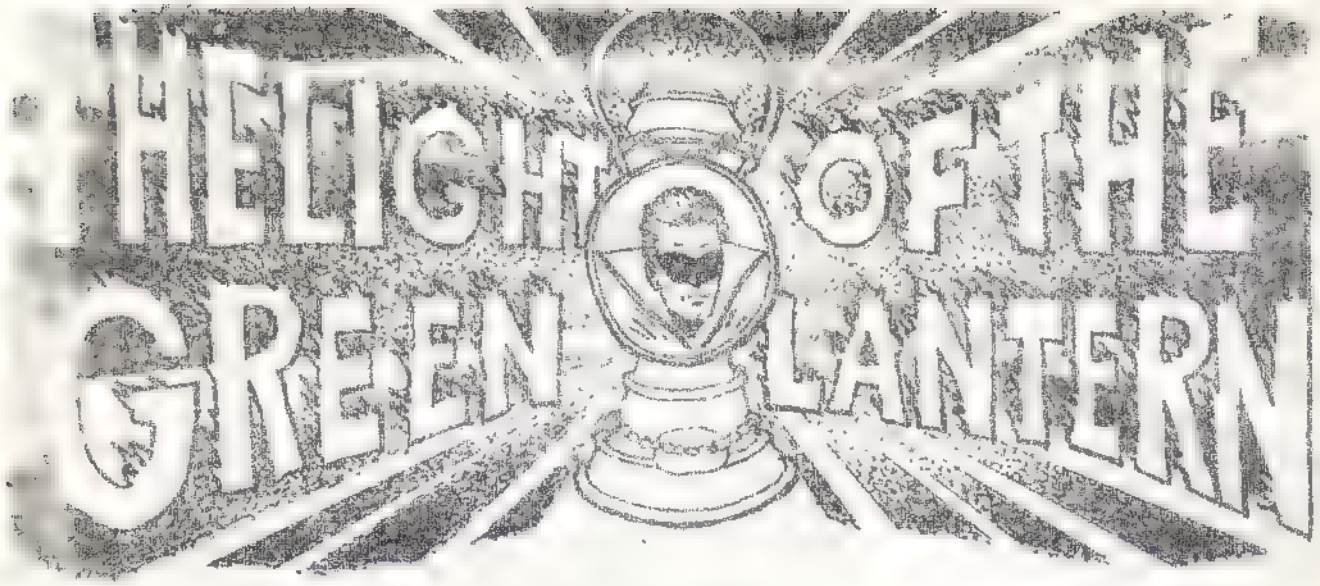
HARD LUCK!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY SOME HOCUS POCUS··HA!HA··· CURSE ME AGAIN YOU OLD COOT!!
THAT
NO! STOP THIS FOOLISHNESS·AAH!
AWAY FROM ROO, LEBOU! SHE'S TO BE MY WIFE!!
NO! MY SON. SHE'S NO!
WHY YOU YOUNG·· I'LL SNAP YOU IN TWO!
WHEN I WANT YOUR GIRL, BOY I'LL JUST TAKE HER··· AND NO ONE'S GOING TO STOP ME!
UUHH!
LET GO OF MY SON, OOLAK, LEBOU!
GET YOUR HANDS OF ME, KISIK!
F—FATHER!
I'VE WARNED YOU PEOPLE BEFORE!
HE SNEEZED MY FAMILY IS DEAD!
WHAT?
HE CAN'T BE? NOW LOOK IT WAS AN ACCIDENT··· JUST THAT PUNCH!
KEEP AWAY FROM
LISTEN TO ME

THE SHAMAN! WE MUST HAVE FAILED ON HIM...!
...STEN... I TOO AM DYING... THIS-THIS SELF'S VIOLENCE MUST CEASE... THE ONE TO CAUSE SUCH WILL FEEL THE WRATH OF THE SPIRITS...!
I, OOLAK, CAUSED THIS!
NO! YOU'RE ONE... DON'T BLAME YOURSELF... ONLY DO THIS... LAY OUR BODIES TOGETHER ON THE PLAIN!
THE TWO BODIES WERE ON THE PLAIN, AND M... OF SPIRITS CAME TO TH... VILLAGE. LEBOU WAS S... CRUEL.....
LARGO, PROMISED IN MARRIAGE TO OOLAK, WAS THE FAIREST GIRL IN THE VILLAGE, AND LEBOU STILL DESIRED HER...
THIS TIME I'LL TAKE HER
LEBOU! STAY AWAY FROM LARGO!
KEEP BACK, OOLAK! SHE IS MINE NOW!
NEVER!
THEN D...
UNNOTICED, THE SK... DARKENS.....
OUT OF THERE GIRL YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE WITH ME
NO! YOU MUST NOT DO THIS!... OH SPIRITS OF MY PEOPLE, HELP ME!
HA! HA! YOUR MUMBO JUMBO WILL DO YOU NO GOOD!
LOOK!
IT! IT'S NOT YOUR SPIRIT, IT'S JUST A METEOR!
THE SPIRITS ANSWERED!
NO IT'S ONLY ... PAIN... IN M... ... BURNING A...

I'M... CAN'T PAIN TAKE
OOLAK
LUGH! MY HEAD WHAT HAPPENED
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND I SHOULD BE DEAD!
OOLAK! OH OOLAK! YOU ALIVE!!
LEBOU STOOD UP AND SPOKE —BUT THE VOICE WAS NOT HIS
LISTEN MY PEOPLE I HAVE RETURNED TO RENDER JUSTICE... RETURN TO YOUR HOMES!
THAT VOICE! OOLAK WHAT DOES IT MEAN
THE SHAMAN WARNED US OF THIS... COME WE CANNOT HELP LEBOU! LOOK AT HIS EYES!
NOW BEGIN TO FAIL
WHERE DOES HE GO
TO MEET THE SPIRITS, WE MUST GO IN... SOON IT WILL BE A BLIZZARD
WHERE THE METEOR LAY, NO SNOW FELL. ITS BLACK SHAPE RADIATED AN UNEARTHLY RED GLOW... IT SHONE
SO LEBOU YOU DARED TO DEFY MY WARNING
YOU RECOGNISED THE VOICE... I SHALL MATERIALISE BEFORE YOU AS THE SHAMAN, JUST ONE FACET OF THE SPIRIT CONTAINED WITHIN THIS SIMPLE SHAPE, PREPARE TO HAVE JUDGEMENT PASSED FOR YOUR EVIL WAYS"
WE ARE WILLING FOR YOU TO HAVE A CHANCE TO REDEEM YOURSELF... YOU WILL BECOME THE SPIRITS CHAMPION AND GUARDIAN OF MY PEOPLE! PROTECTING THEM AGAINST SUCH AS YOURSELF BUT YOU MUST AGREE... I SEE IN YOUR MIND YOU DO! GOOD! OUR FIRST TASK IS TO PREPARE YOU...
YOUR BODY WILL BE MADE HARD AS THIS METEOR, AND GIVEN STRENGTH TO MATCH, YOUR CLOTHING IS NOT SUITABLE FOR YOUR FUTURE TASKS... SO...
NOW WE GIVE YOU CONTROL OF YOUR MIND, AGAIN, BUT YOU ARE NO LONGER LEBOU, BUT FORGE CONTACT WITH US, THE SPIRITS OF OUR PEOPLE... NOW BEGIN YOUR TASK!


LOOK THE ONE IN BLACK PUTS THE SPIRIT ROCK FOR ALL TO SEE!
IT IS SAID HE COMES TO HELP US!
THE GUARD
STOP CRIMINAL
BANG
BANG!
NO ONE STOPS ME, MISTER!
I COULDN'T HAVE MISSED! I'M SURE I HIT HIM!
HUH?! WHERE DID HE GO?
DESIST VILLAIN
YOU CRUSHED MY GUN!!
CRUSH
THIS IS TOO MUCH! I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!
LOST HIM! NO ONE'S IN FRONT!
ESCAPE IS USELESS
SHOOK HIM OFF AGAIN, IF ONLY I HADN'T DROPPED MY TORCH!

SHOW YOURSELF! WHY DON'T YOU SHOW YOURSELF?
GLUNK
WHAT WAS THAT?
COME ON!
NICE AND PEACEFUL!
WORLD'S FAIR POLICE HQ
YES!
THE WALL GLOWS...
THIS MAN IS A THIEF THE LAW MUST PUNISH
SPOOKY?
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS PHANTOM CHARACTER?
BEATS ME! GIVES ME THE CREEPS TO THINK ABOUT IT!
NEXT DAY
READ IN THE PAPERS YOU SAW A GHOST, MR.
PHANTOM AT WORLD'S FAIR



BY MIKE HILL

In the late 1930s and early '40s,DC produced some very successful characters.Notably Superman,Batman,The Spectre,Flash and Green Lantern.These heroes owed their success to originality,good stories, and their off beat ways of fighting crime.In these days where a costumed heroes are a dime a dozen,a new hero goes virtually unnoticed,but in those days,they were a complete change from the run of the mill detective,comedy or adventure stories.The more off beat they were,the more they were liked,and one of the most unusual was the Green Lantern.

All American Comics No.1 came out in April 1939,one month before Batman's debut,and was just another title.There was nothing about it to suggest it would last for long.A year went by.New blood was injected into ailing titles - Detective Comics got Batman,the creature of the night.More Fun Comics got the Spectre,a hero died in his first story. Action had already got off to a strong start with Superman,a more than remarkable person at the time,although taken for granted nowadays.A character named the Flash appeared in a mgazine of his own,with his power being that of speed - speed enough to outrun a bullet!

Any new hero had quite a bit of competition already.He had to have a gimmick - and a very good one.

Green Lantern had that.Based on an idea by Martin Nodell,submitted to editor Sheldon Mayer,the scripts were handed to Bill Finger. Because of his likeness to Aladdin (and his magic lamp),his identity was to be made Alan Ladd,but this sounded too corny and it was changed to Alan Scott.This was before actor Alan Ladd made it big in This Gun for Hire in 1942.

Green Lantern - or GL,as he is commonly called - made his first appearance in All American Comics No.16,July 1940.He was also featured on the cover,a very striking one.The cover blurb was "Introducing the Green Lantern",and it showed GL leaping onto a steel girder,while faced by a crook carrying a machine gun pointed at him.Oddly enough,he wasn't using his power on the cover.

The inside cover stated: 'Boys and Girls - we hope you like the new cover design on this issue of All American Comics.We know you're going to like our new feature which begins on the very next page! The Green Lantern.Thrilling! Startling! Different! (Then there's a plug for

Flash No.7) P.S.Don't forget this month's issue of Flash Comics now ! " followed by a small reproduction of the cover of Flash with Hawkman on the cover.Incidentally,although published by DC,t publishers were listed as All American Comics,Inc..Possibly one of t dodge publishing names,although DC later did split around 194 into DC and All American.Details on this aren't too clear,though.

Now the part you've been waiting for.On the top of the firs was the Green Lantern logo in burning green flame with black ering.To one side of this was a green lantern casting a green h ing on the other side of the title a train travelling over a rail bridge suspended high in the mountains.An explanation is given: Out th Great West,a train makes a test crossing over a newly constructe trestle bridge.In the cab is Alan Scott,young engineer in charge of construction.He is chatting to a friend: "I tell you,Scott,I'm worried. Dekker isn't one to take it lying down.He'll try something...he's dangerous!" Scott: "Nonsense! Just because my company's bid to build the bridge was chosen by the government in head of Dekker's is no reason for revenge! He won't try anything!"

Suddenly,a deafening blast and the train hurtles to certain destruction below! From the wreck rises a staggering figure...Alan Scott! He surveys the wreckage."Dead...all dead....Yet by some sort of strange miracle,I'm still alive!" Then he realises that he is still holding the lantern in his hand,the one he was holding before the crash.He suddenly feels dizzy,and faints.The green lantern flares up in intensity and an ageless,toneless voice that penetrates into Scott's subconscious,tells him "I am the green flame of life! Listen,chosen one, and hear the tale of the green lantern!"

"Many years ago in old China,while the people were at their evening prayers,they suddenly heard a great rushing noise and looked up to see a huge meteor falling.The meteor cracked,broke open...and there in the heart of the shell...was a small pool of liquid flaming metal...To the awestricken people came a message from the strange green light: Three times shall I flame green! First,to bring death! Second, to bring life! Third,to bring power! Abruptly the flame went out,the metal began to cool.

Chang the lamp maker had read books predicting the coming of the meteor and takes it to his shop where he fashions it into a lamp. (Of the Aladdin type.) However,the villagers believe this to be evil, and Chang to be a reader of evil sorcerous books.They raid his shop, burn his books and kill him.But they had forgotten the phrophesy of the lamp."Three times shall I flame! First,to bring death!" The lamp flames,and the evil villagers perish in a burst of deadly green radiance.

The lamp passed through many hands in its travels.Curiously, however,to the bad it brought destruction...to the good...luck,and fortune.Finally it ends up in a dustbin outside an insane asylum,where a guard gives it to an inmate named Billings,who makes lanterns out of old metal.Billings makes it into a modern train lantern and then lights the wick.Within moments,a weird green radiance fills every nook and cranny of the room.The second part of the prophesy comes to be - it brings life! Billings' mind is restored and he walks out of the asylum shortly afterwards,completely sane,to a new life.

From there,the lantern finally reaches Alan Scott,its green radiance burning its message into his brain: "You have heard the tale of the green lantern! To you I bring fulfilment of the prophesy...Third, to bring power! For I am the flame of life! Green,as are the plants,the growing things! You who are to have this power,you must use it to end

evil! The light of the green lantern must be shed over th dark,evil things,for the dark evil things cannot stand light! Power shall be yours,if you have faith in yourself.Lose that faith and you shall lose that energy power of the green lantern,for will power is the flame of the green lantern!"

At this point Alan Scott wakes up and questions the lantern: "To have the power,must I always have the green lantern with me?" The lantern replies: "It would be well for you to utilise part to make a ring...A ring with my flame! To renew its power,the ring must touch the green lantern once every twenty-four hours!"

With the last word,the light fades until only a tiny, constant flame is left in the wick. Alan Scott feels as though he has emerged from a dream and wonders if it could be real,but on picking up the lantern,his body glows with an emerald energy,and he realises it was all real.Picking up the lantern,he comes back to reality and sees all the wreckage and bodies scattered all around.He remembers his friend's words about Dekker,and a mad light comes into his eyes and revenge burns strongly in his heart.

Half crazed with revenge,he returns to his home and constructs a ring of metal from the lantern.This has the appearance of a small green lantern in which a green flame burns,with a green metal finger band.Cold sanity returns to Alan Scott as he dons the ring.He no longer wants to kill Dekker,but he must pay for his crimes.

That night,the ring on his finger,he is in the woods nearby, not sure how to utilise the ring's power,when suddenly he streaks skyward with the speed of the light which he is enveloped in.He realises that he had wished to be able to fly to Dekker,and also remembers what the lantern had said.It worked by Will Power! He arrives at Dekker's place moments later.

As a further test of the ring,he wishes to be fourth dimensional, to be able to go through things,in this case,the wall of Dekker's place. Dekker is busy gloating over his success with his henchmen when a green radiance appears on the wall.They turn to look at it and are further startled by a ghostly green figure materialising from the wall.They recognise Alan Scott,and the fact that he should have been killed in the crash.The crooks pull their guns and empty them at the figure calmly standing there,surrounded by the strange green radiance.All to no effect. Believing him to be wearing a bullet proof vest,they try knives,but these prove equally useless.However,a wooden club from behind downs him.

here,he realises he is not all powerful.A kick with both feet fr... ing position on the floor to a crook's chin confirms that he onl... normal strength,which is enough to knock the crooks around. The others out of the fight,Alan Scott faces Dekker,who tries to bribe his way out.Scott decides to teach him a lesson.He lifts Dekker up and takes him up for a flight high over the mountains.A confession is obtained by threatening to drop him.Dekker signs the confession,but the shock proves too much for him,and he falls to the floor,dead!

Alan Scott realises that this is his destiny,to fight evil and decides to make himself a costume so bizarre that,once seen,it will never be forgotten.In the last panel,he is seen in costume (the only other place apart from the cover) reciting his oath,"...and I shall use my light over dark evil...for the dark evil cannot stand the light.... the light of the Green Lantern!" The reader is promised: The man who suddenly appears out of nothingness whenever and wherever there is a wrong to be righted.The Green Lantern.Follow his further weird and exciting adventures in the next issue of All American Comics."

Another giant had emerged to join the line of DC heroes.All American Comics was destined to become a big seller from then on although admittedly after a story like that the rest of the comic was somewhat of a let down.

Incidentally,the art was by Martin Nodell (signed Mart Dellon) and story by Bill Finger.The issue also had an ad for All Star Comics No.1,which GL missed - it came out Summer,1940,at the same time as All American No.16.

As promised,GL was back in All American next month (No.17,August 1940) and on the cover,which showed him diving onto a crook carrying a gun,with one hand around the crook's neck,the other on his gun arm. The inside cover had a message for the readers: "Thanks,boys and girls, for the wonderful reception you gave to last month's issue of All American Comics with its exciting new feature,The Green Lantern! Thrilling! Startling! Different! " And yet another plug for the Flash,this time No.8,with the Flash on the cover.Strange they should know about the good reception issue 16 got when issues are prepared months in advance,so they wouldn't have had sales returns until around issue 20, in those days possibly later,and issue 16 wouldn't even have been on sale at the time issue 17 was being prepared.

The story is untitled,artists and writers as last issue.A short explanation is given of the previous issue.The story opens with the Commissioner of Public Works telling the representatives of certain companies that Muller Contractors have been chosen to build the new library.Their bid has been accepted.This causes an uproar.Both John Hall,employer,and his chief engineer,Alan Scott,talk it over afterwards.Hall tells of rumours that say that Cyrus Gorson (the Commissioner) has shares in Muller's and takes part of the exorbitant prices they charge for his own pocket.

Alan Scott decides on a bold ruse and confronts Gorson with his villainy.Muller,also there,doesn't escape confrontation.Scott then tells them he is going to give the story to all the newspapers.He leaves. Behind him,they discuss plans for eliminating him,and a hit man is sent after Scott.

On arriving home,Scott touches his ring to the green lantern causing a swell of light.(No oath is used here.) He then goes out into the street and makes himself an easy target for the gunman.They oblige by shooting him down from a passing car.Unknown to them,the bullets don't harm him because of the power of the green lantern,but he plays

and so they don't get suspicious.When they are out of sight,he quickly comes to GL and follows their car with comet-like speed.The car stops at Muller's Store House.

Using the same trick he used last issue,GL again walks through the walls through the wall.Bullets once more prove useless against the shield of emerald light.Here,he first calls himself Green Lantern while confronting the crooks.To further prove his power,he first cuts a pile steel girders in half and then reduces them to molten metal.

Muller decoys GL into his office and catches him with a booby trap,a loose plank of wood hits GL on the head .Wood being one of his weaknesses,he is knocked unconscious,chained up,and dumped into the river.However,the cold water revives him;at his command,his ring bursts the chains and he confronts Muller and Garson.GL convinces the superstitious crooks that he is now a ghost and will haunt them until their evil is ended. His spectral form,dripping with river water,helps his act.

Muller is not fully convinced and tries to shoot GL and Garson,dreading supernatural vengeance,tries to stop him,but is shot by the treacherous Muller. GL KOs Muller with one punch and then phones the police to tell them of Garson's murder.When asked who he is, GL says,"Who am I?...Why, I'm the little man who wasn't there!" Then he hangs up.

The police arrive, but Green Lantern is already gone.The only sign left of his intervention is a green mark on Muller's cheek in the shape of a lantern.

Hall and Scott are reading the paper the next day.Hall mentions the green ghost who calls himself green lantern,but Scott is sceptical about his existence.The story ends with the same promise as last issue.GL is here to stay.

The cover of All American No.18 (September 1940) shows GL flying over the 1939/40 World's Fair using his ring on a plane which is dive-bombing the

Fair.A bullet is shown hitting GL without visible effect.This was [illegible] cover on which he was shown as anything other than an ordinary costumed crime fighter.Inside of the cover was virtually the same [illegible] 47 except that it mentions two issues and advertises Flash No.[illegible] which has a Hawkman cover.Artist and writer as last two issues.

Story starts with Alan Scott at the World's Fair.Having spent [illegible] day walking around,he decides to drop into the 'Condor' cafe to rest.Here he sees a girl about to shoot a man in the back,from near the [illegible] revealing curtains.He snatches the gun away,and finds out from her that the man is called Murdock,a crook (natch!) who framed her brother Danny,an ex-con who wanted to go straight,for drunked driving where a woman was killed.Scott mentions that he has a friend who might be able to help her.Her name is Irene Miller.

In his sanctum as Green Lantern,Scott charges his ring with the oath "And I shall shed my light over dark evil,for the dark things cannot stand the light of the Green Lantern!" GL then flies off to visit Irene Miller's brother in prison.(Note: When GL flew in most of the early issues,he was enveloped in a ray from his ring,as though he were using his ring on himself at the time.) He enters the prison through the fourth dimension,and materialises in front of Danny Miller. GL learns from him that Murdock plans to steal the proceeds from tonight's Hall of Music concert,which is to be used to help fight infantile paralysis.

Meanwhile,the thieves have stolen the takings but as they make their getaway,GL swoops down onto the car roof.The first thing the hoods know of his presence is a fist being held over the windscreen, the fist having a green ring on it.They recognise it for what it is, the driver panics and they crash.

GL allows one of the crooks to escape,but hands the rest over to the police,and then flies off as they start questioning him.The crook who has escaped tellsMurdock all,and Murdock thinks Judge Wade has spilled the beans,and decides to silence him with a knife.GL has meanwhile flown to the executive building at the fair,and finds the Condor cafe is owned by Wade and is a front for Murdock.

GL arrives in time to prevent Wade being murdered.Murdock,it turns out,is holding Wade's daughter to insure cooperation.The ring exposes Murdock's thoughts that tell GL where the girl is hidden and GL returns her to her father shortly.Murdock tries to kill GL with a gun he had hidden on his person,and fails.He tries to escape,but is cornered on top of the perisphere (where the daughter was held).In a hand to hand fight,GL is knocked down,and Murdock tries to kick GL off, but GL grabs his ankle,overbalancing him and Murdock falls off the curved surface to the ground below.He just has time to confess that he framed Danny Miller before he dies,in front of witnesses.The last two panels show Scott and Irene Miller talking the spadework of future romance being done.The story ends with the words,coming from the green lantern: "The man who appears from nowhere and strikes with the speed of a cobra! The man who is a blessing to the weak and downfallen and a curse to all evildoers...Follow the adventures of the Green Lantern every month in All American Comics!"

Note: I wonder what happened to the villains he tackled in Action without a costume.They would have realised by now that Alan Scott is the Green Lantern.He could possibly have wiped the memory from their minds with the aid of his ring.

All America No.19 (October 1940) showed GL knocking an arsonist with a knife off a roof,and also mention the Mighty Atom,this

...ing the Golden Age Atom's origin and first appearance.writer and artist as previous issues.

The third panel shows GL jumping from a bridge onto a gang of crooks shooting up at him.This is very similar,in the way it's drawn, ...e cover of Detective No.33,featuring Batman instead of Green Lantern.

The story starts when Alan Scott saves a man from being run ... car.The man gives Scott his card and tells him to see him some ... ,and he'll thank him properly.However,next day,Scott reads that ... he saved the day before (Joseph Prentiss) has been killed by a ... run driver.He decides to investigate as Green Lantern.He surpris... crooks who are in the act of burning Prentiss's home over.A fig... ...s and the crooks are only too glad to surrender.GL forces from ... of the crooks the address of a man called Hodges,whom he had hear... one of the crooks mention was going to be bumped off that night,and ...s there.On arriving,he finds out from Hodge's wife that men in a car picked him up a short time ago.

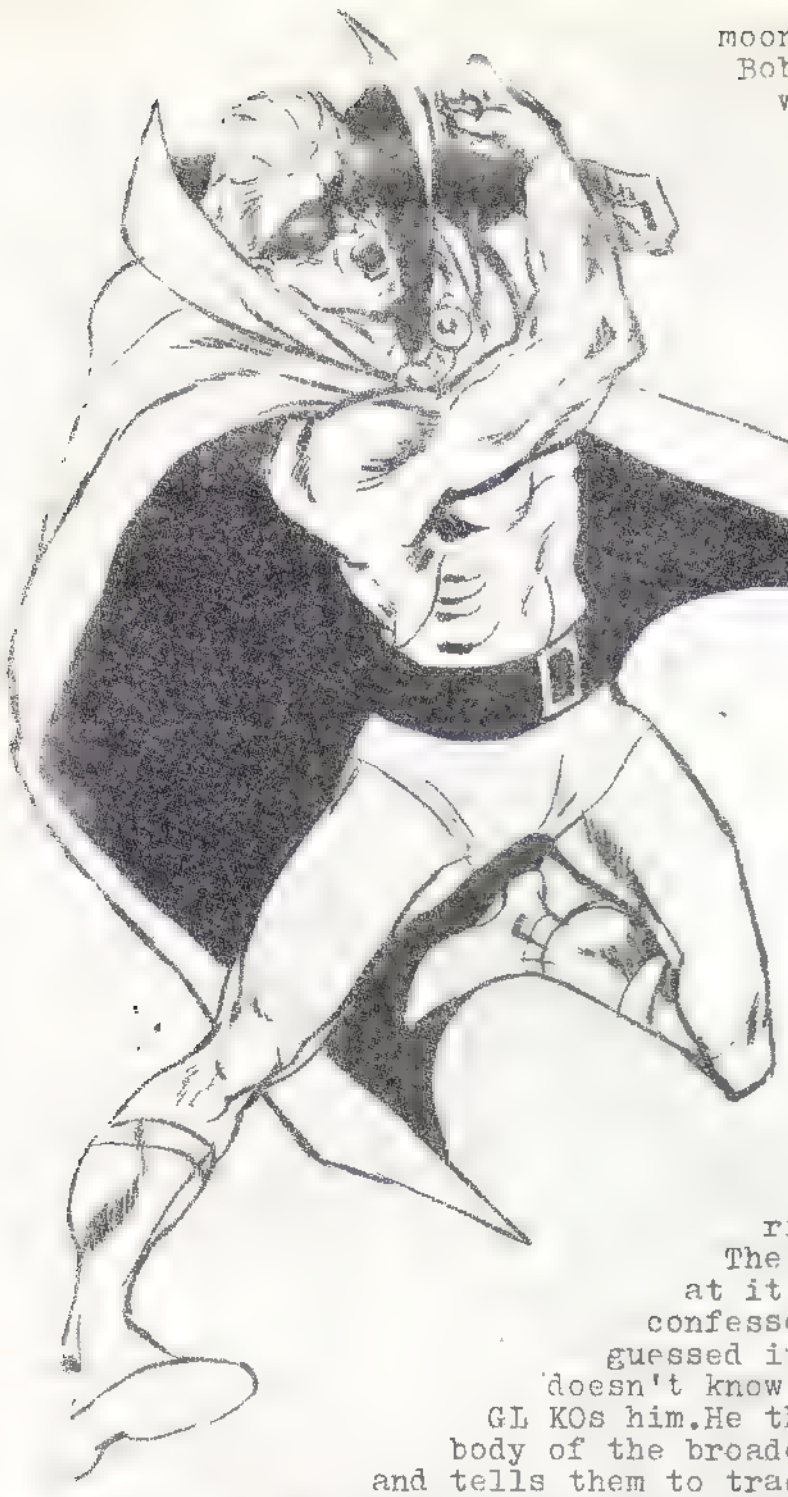
The car is parked on a lonely road,and Hodges is pushed off a cliff to his death.GL races with death,and wins.Hodges is caught and ...ered to the ground.Talking to Hodges,GL finds out that Slade,a ...terious gambler,is running an insurance racket where he gets people ...name him as the beneficiary in case of accident,causes the "accident" ... collects the money.The reason they put Slade as the payee for their policies is because of gambling debts they owe to him.

A Mr Titus is duped into this a few nights later,and is shot by ... men while on his way home that night.He is robbed.The next day Wo... ...s to the insurance company to collect on the Hodges and Titus ...cies but is shocked into confessing when he sees them both standing ...ere alive.Titus peals off his outer garments to stand revealed as ... scourge of all evil - Green Lantern!

GL then goes to Slade who finds out that bullets can't kill GL. ...another room,while trying to escape him,he finds a rifle and uses it ... club,the wooden stock being used to knock GL out.Slade decides to ...rose of him in a vat of acid,but in true hero fashion,GL recovers at ... last moment and kicks out at Slade,who is dragging him nearer and ...er to the vat,which is beneath a trap door in the floor.Slade pl...s through the trap door to his doom.

All Star Comics No.? is also advertised in this issue.The cover shows a city background in silhouette form and three figures close up. The one in the middle is GL,exactly as he appeared on the cover of ...C.On his left is the Flash,exactly as he appeared on the cover of F...sh No.8.On GL's right,the Spectre - I recognise that pose from one of ... More Fun covers,but I can't say which one off hand.GL and Johnny Thunder were voted into All S... No.2 by the readers of All Star No.1. ...won't mention GL's appearances in All Star in this article - they can wait for a future article on All Star and the Justice Society of America.

All American Comics No.20 (November 1940) had a good enough cover at first glance,but then you began to notice things about it on looking at it more closely.It showed GL lifting a crook above his head to throw at another crook who was holding a gun.The scene takes place on a wharf at night time,but the crook with the gun is pointing at the other crook ...t GL.There is a large full moon behind both of them - the wooden anchor beams projecting up from the wharf are projecting shadows towards ... moon.The crook at the wharf's edge with the gun has a nondescript ...dow area around his shoes which could be pointing in nay direction, ...t GL and the other crook have no shadow.It looks as though the full



moon was an afterthought (- - Bob Kane) and that GL's shadow was erased.

Artist and writer as previous issue.

The first page is a retelling of GL's origin. Page two starts the story. A broadcaster leaving the studios is riddled with machine gun bullets from a passing car. GL decides to investigate and talks to the wife of the broadcaster. She just has time to mention the villain responsible (he's called 'The Boss' - what else?) when she is killed by a sniper's bullet. GL sees the sniper leaving the door of the room across the street, two floors up. The scene changes to GL chasing the crooks' car. Why didn't GL catch him coming out of the building? A green ray from GL's ring stalls the car's motor. The crook gets out to have a look at it and walks into GL. He quickly confesses that he was hired by - you guessed it! - the Boss. However, the crook doesn't know where the Boss operates from. GL KOs him. He then phones the police about the body of the broadcaster's wife (Mrs Jim Tellum) and tells them to trace the call to find the tied up killer. The call is made by hooking directly into a telegraph wire and doesn't last long enough for anyone to trace it. The wife of the broadcaster, it turns out, hasn't yet died, a slight change of plot. She lives long enough to tell the police "Tops!" Alan Scott reads this in the newspaper next day, and realises that she is referring to Radio "Tops" of the Apex Broadcasting System. He decides to get a job there to pick up inside info' on the case, and then realises that it would help his GL activities, because he would get the news reports first hand, in true Clark Kent style. He reports to Mr Gates, the manager, but there are no jobs at present. He leaves his name and address. As he leaves,

he bumps into Irene Miller.(From AA18.) He tells her about the murder, [illegible] that they & even to "Tops" toothpaste,who sponsor the show.The place is a shabby little office,and men are there meeting.One of them recognises Scott,guns are pulled and "Duke" has them put into separate rooms,tied up.Here is the first mention of how GL carries his ring about in civilian identity.He had a false top put on it,which is released by pressing it,revealing the ring of power underneath.The ring disposes of the bonds and Scott becomes GL.He walks through the locked door.

GL overhears the crooks and realises the "Tops" programme is a front,and that the "Boss" only uses the programme so he can relay information all over the country to hoodlums who understand the code he uses.Tonight's message is about a load of silk being smuggled in. The crooks go after it,and GL goes after them.He catches them in the act,and knocks a few crooks about using his ring,which is far more powerful than any acetylene torch.

The Duke is persuaded to tell who the Boss is as an alternative to being dropped from a great height.GL then confronts the Boss,Gates, with the evidence.Unknown to Gates,GL has a dictaphone hidden nearby. Gates spills the beans,then is KO'd by GL.A swift change back to Scott and he releases Irene Miller.They find Gates tied up,and the dictaphone message convicting him.Scott pretends ignorance.The only evidence left behind as to the identity of their saviour is a green imprint of a lantern on Gates' face.The story ends with GL (Alan Scott) getting a job at Apex Broadcasting and Irene Miller falling for GL as did Carol Ferris for the second GL 20 years later.

All America Comics No.21 (December 1940)shows,on the cover,GL knocking out a crook,with a machine gun enveloped in green flame flying from the crooks's hands,and a look that can't be mistaken for anything but rage on GL's face.

Artist/writer as previous.In the splash panel,it mentions GL's powers as being "Streaking through the air,immune to all metals,walking through obstacles,these and other supernatural gifts,augmented by his own tremendous will power"..and so on.

The story starts with some crooks talking about a couple who lost their son 11 years ago and the youngest member of their gang,one "Cub",happens to look like the boy would now.The couple are,of course, rich.Also,a fake has benn made of the "Blake locket",which the boy would be carrying to help the imposter's story.This takes place in the offices of Elias Shake (Bill Finger seemed to have something about people in high places and responsible positions).The plan is for "Cub" to steal the $100,000 from the Blakes' secret vault.

The crooks go through with their plot and Cub,now named Tommy Blake,is believed to be the long lost son,by the old couple.The old couple get on their knees and offer a prayer of thanks and Cub,looking on from the shadows,is touched by the scene despite his hard exterior. (Excuse me while I get some fresh air.)

At Apex Broadcasting Company,Alan Scott and Irene Miller hear of the prodigal son's return through a newscaster named Tyler.Scott is bothered,however,by the unsavoury reputation of the lawyer who found the boy.He decides to investiagte as GL.A quick change and he touches his ring against the green lantern,causing a flare of green light. He then recites his oath.Rushing over the city,like a green comet,GL arrives at his destination moments later.He arrives as "Tommy Blake" is leaving in his car and decides to follow,straight to...Elias Shake. "Tommy Blake" gives over details of the house just as GL enters.GL

shrugs off their bullets then knocks them about a bit.He then gives them a warning that if they hurt the old couple,he'd destroy them.He tells them he'll return at 9 O'Clock tomorrow night,and that they had better be gone.

GL arrives next night at two minutes to nine,but the open window with a light on triggers a sixth sense,causing him to activate his ring to detect any evil in the room.A hat box begins to glow with a weird green light,and a time bomb is revealed inside.GL dives for the window, but is caught in the blast.He falls to the cement sidewalk below and lies there,stunned.

Meanwhile,at the Blakes' house,the crooks are getting into the safe.Cub tells the others he has sent the old couple off to the movies, but they unexpectedly return,to catch the crooks in the act.The old man is shot,and Cub dives for Stake as he wants no more part in this,but is clubbed down by Strake's gun.

Meanwhile,GL recovers but the explosion has left him weak,and he can't summon up enough power to fly.He decides to run till he recovers from the shock.He eventually arrives at the Blakes' house,to find the wife kneeling over the wounded husband.GL realises that he only has a flesh wound."Tommy Blake",it turns out,has recovered and he has told the old couple he has betrayed them and is trying to make amends.GL, realising the boy has some good,goes after the boy to save him.

GL sees the boy in his car in time to see him try to commit suicide by plunging his car over the edge of a precipice.The car slams into a wall of unyielding green light.GL persuades the boy that he could redeem himself by catching the crooks.He also tells him that Blake will recover.

Strake and his crony are about to split the loot.Strake decides half isn't enough and shoots the other crook.GL and "Tommy" arrive,GL disarms Strake and leaves him to "Tommy",who then starts bruising his fists on Straker's anatomy and face.GL decides to leave something for the police and drags "Tommy" off.At the police station,they hear the confession of the dying crook (named Tipper).

GL,it turns out,has had a temporary truce with the police to bring the crooks in.The police are about to drag Strake and "Tommy" off to the cells when Mrs Blake speaks up to say that the boy really is Tommy Blake.Not only did she recognise him,but she has also identified him by a mis-shapen and scarred finger on his left hand,the results of an accident when he was a "little tyke".As the Blakes won't prosecute their own son,the police let him go.GL vanishes out of the window,and another case is closed for GL.

All America Comics No.21 (January 1941) showed on the cover GL hanging onto a steel beam with his hands and using his feet to kick a crook in the face,causing him to fall backwards (probably to his death).The crook is holding a fizzing stick of dynamite in his hand. This cover,taking on the framework of a building under construction,is similar to AA16's cover.It makes me wonder if this wasn't the first attempt at a cover for AA16,but was considered good enough and discarded, and another one drawn.As with most of the early covers,GL isn't using his ring.I suppose they had a reason for it,although I don't know what. Artist and writer as previous.

The story starts off with a splash of GL bursting through the front page of a newspaper.The paper is the Daily Globe,price 3¢,dated November 15th,1940 (about the date when AA22 hit the stands),and it mentions Capitol City as the place of publishing.Big headlines: Green Lantern Aids Police.Then : Exposes New Racket of Lawyer.This is of

course Elias Strake of the previous issue,now being held on a murder charge.

The story starts with Irene Miller,Alan Scott and Tyler talking about a fight between Kid McKay (the good guy) and Brute Nolan (managed by a gang of villains,the bad guy).The fight is also the subject of conversation in another part of town where the villains intend to see that McKay has an accident before the fight.

That night,GL feels restless and decides to patrol the city. By some strange coincidence,he sees a gang beating a lone man (guessed who yet?) .He enters the fray and finishes it by throwing one of the villains at four others,bowling them over like tenpins.GL learns that the victim is McKay and guesses that the villains intend to see that he doesn't make the fight.McKay leaves,and GL decides to trail him from a distance,which proves fortunate since someone tries to run McKay down.GL prevents this by melting through the bottom of a street lamp causing it to fall on the speeding car and crash it.The driver makes a run for it and follows and finds out where he works.

That night,he visits McKay,who has received a note from Karaste (the villain).The note reads: If you ever want to see your wife again, lose the fight! GL tells McKay to fight,but if necessary to take a dive in the last round to save his wife,meanwhile he'll try to find McKay's wife.He decides to try the "driver" for information.Appearing in front of the "driver",GL gets down to business straight away,and tells the "driver" that he'll beat him to a pulp unless he talks.The "driver" pulls a gun,to no effect,then rushes through the door and locks it,to be followed by GL walking through the wall.The crook talks after a bit more persuasion.

GL heads for the place where the wife is kept,but unknown to him,the crooked driver has phoned them up to prepare a welcoming committee.Meanwhile,the fight starts.

GL falls into the crooks' trap,and is set on by them.A terrific fight ensues but he is laid low by a rubber (non-metallic) blackjack (which his ring can't protect him from,like wood.) A crook takes GL's ring,and tries it on.He dies screaming in an aura of burning green radiance.GL has managed to cut himself free with a piece of broken mirror,and uses the ropes to whip the crooks until they shriek for mercy.GL regains his ring and quickly flies McKay's wife to the fight where McKay has been listlessly taking a beating from the champ. He is floored,but just then GL arrives with Mrs McKay and McKay is filled with renewed energy,and KOs the champ.Karaste ends up in jail.

Still to come:

the introduction of
Doiby Dickles
Green Lantern's own
comic book
GL's 'name' villains

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